■ Entertainment
The thoroughly independent Jaclyn Jose

■ Lifestyle/C1
500 images of Sto. Niño on exhibit at PNB Financial Center

■ World/A7
Rosemary Kennedy, sister of JFK, 86

■ Metro
WPD top dog still's way to commendation

JOB
Get that job to change your life

Who eats fish in tsunami land! WHO chief, that's who

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka—The chief of the World Health Organization said Saturday he has been eating fish in Sumatra after hurricane-induced problems.

"Fish is a good source of protein and I am eating fish," WHO's Dr.

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER Sunday
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Millionaire clears road but doesn't want to be named

By Ronnie D. Focio
INQUIRER South Luzon Bureau

REAL, Quezon—Unbeknownst to the general public, a multi-million-peso road project by a multi-millionaire from Pasig City has been taking up the lion's share of clearing to embattled 11-kilometer stretch of the national road in

Sunday, January 9, 2005 ★ 24 pages / vol. 20 / no. 22
website: www.inq7.net

TSUNAMI: Across time and memory. An unpredictable wave engenders life and death. A silent scream. In Puri, south of the Indian state of Orissa, Bhubaneshwar Indian artist Sudarshan Patnaik captures and immortalizes the profile of a victim of the apocalyptic disaster that swept through 11 countries from Asia to Africa.

Pinoys less gloomy in '05

But GMA approval rating still going down, says Ibon poll

By Lupa A. del Puerto

DESPITE a year hounded by fiscal woes and runaway oil prices, many Filipinos are much less pessimistic about the prospects of the economy in 2005, according to the latest Ibon Foundation survey.

The number of respondents who said the economy would worsen actually went down to 33.5% per cent in December 2004, from 53.2% percent in the previous Ibon survey of October 2004, Ibon said.

Of the 1,511 respondents interviewed nationwide, 36.88 percent said they believed the economy would remain the same. Only 27.47 percent had said that in October.

But if they were not quite gloomy about their economic conditions, those surveyed were decidedly cheerless with President Macapagal-Arroyo's performance, according to the survey.

The survey said 79.89 percent of respondents felt that the President's performance was unsatisfactory. The figure was 76.33 percent in October and 59.6 percent in April.

"Overall, the satisfactory rating of the President has been going down, and it has gone to its lowest so far in December, while her unsatisfactory rating has gone over the roof," Ibon Executive Director Sonny Africa told a press briefing.

Explaining the discrepancy between people's responses on the economy and their disapproval of the President, Tujan said that it could be because Filipinos were naturally inclined to be hopeful.

"You have a situation where even if the economy is bad, [people still say] maybe something could still be done about it," he said.

Those who felt that the President did her job well fell to 6.25 percent in December, from 8.46 percent in October, and 22.20 percent in April, Ibon said.

The survey was conducted between Dec. 20 and 29, 2004. It

FLASHBACK to another horror for Filipino-American sailor Joshua Ray who took himself on the same US Navy carrier, the USS Abraham Lincoln, that rescued her from the devastation of the Mt. Pinatubo eruption 12 years ago. Here she serves as cook and administrative assistant on the same carrier that's helping rescue in Aceh.

FROM PINATUBO TO ACEH

Fil-Am back on US ship that rescued her

IT WAS horror that descended on Joshua and her mother Marlene when volcanic ash from the eruption of Mount Pinatubo began to rain down on their home in the Philippines. She was a 6-year-old girl then.

Now, on board the USS Abraham Lincoln sailing across the sea toward the devastated coast of Sumatra, Joshua Ray Lee remembered the same dark 12 years ago, packed with evacuees from another great Asian disaster.

She was among those evacuees.

"It's horrible, what happened to those people out there," she says of the up to 100,000 people swept to death in Indonesia by the waves.

The horror of flight from the 1991 Pinatubo eruption, which killed more than 700 people in its wake, has never left Joshua.

When friends urged them to watch a 60 Story movie recounting American rescue from the disaster area, Joshua and her

Lovers no more, just 'friends'

LOS ANGELES—Hollywood glamour couple Brad Pitt and Jennifer Aniston have split, his publicist has confirmed.

"We would like to announce that after seven years together we have decided to formally separate," the couple said in a statement released Friday.

"For those who follow these sorts of things, we would like to explain that our separation is not the result of any speculation reported by the tabloid media," the actors said.

Tabloid gossipsters have linking Pitt to Angelina Jolie, his co-star in an upcoming thriller called "Mr. and Mrs. Smith."

But the couple didn't indicate if they plan to divorce, and publicist Cindy Guagenti declined to comment beyond the statement, which also said, "We happily remain committed and caring friends with great love and admiration for one another."

The separation, first reported on People magazine's website, comes less-and-a-half years after

THE SPLIT: Brad Pitt and Jennifer Aniston is rumored to have been caused by a third party: Angelina Jolie.

PNP links Islamic converts' group to Jemaah Islamiya

By Fe Zamora
and Leila B. Salaverria

THE ALLEGED PLOT to sow violence during today's celebrations of the feast of the Black Nazarene in Quiapo was hatched by suspected members of the militant Hukbong Khalid Tinulad (HKT), the officer in charge of the Philippine National Police's Criminal Investigation and Detection Agency said yesterday.

According to Supt. Rodolfo Mendoza, the HKT—supposedly formed after a fallen Muslim militant—is a cell of the Rajah Solaiman Movement (RSM), an organization of Islamic converts with alleged links to the separatist Moro Islamic Liberation Front and the Jemaah Islamiyah.

"The HKT/RSM should be taken very seriously as it could be even more dangerous than the Abu Sayyaf group," Mr. MENDOZA said. He said the HKT/RSM is being funded by foreign connection that he did not identify.

Mendoza said the 16 people arrested in a raid Friday at the Islamic Information Center in Blumentritt, Manila, were members of the HKT.

The raiders had said they confiscated improvised firearms and explosive devices, which were purportedly intended to be detonated during the Black Nazarene procession.

But National Capital Region Police Director Avelino Razon Jr. had said it might be premature to conclude that the armed presences was the target.

Police yesterday filed complaints of illegal possession of explosives and firearms against five of the 16 arrested at the Islamic Information Center, which is on the third floor of the Aguinaldo Building at the corner of Tek Avenue and

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

SUNDAY, JANUARY 9, 2005

WEATHER FORECAST

Second **FRONTPAGE**

NAT'L BUDGET NEXT TARGET

Special session elates GMA

By Juliet Labog-Javellana, Michael Lim Ubac and Cynthia D. Balana

ALTHOUGH the three-day special session of Congress ended Friday with not a single bill ratified, President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday still expressed elation over the passage of the lateral attrition bill by the Senate.

"Once more, I would like to thank the Senate for the passage of the lateral attrition bill, as I anticipate that this will be cleared smoothly through bicameral conference with the House," Ms Arroyo said in a statement.

Note on the President's wish list is the speedy passage by Congress of the proposed national budget for 2005, which the House approved last year and is now being deliberated in the Senate. The government is currently operating on its old budget.

"The second thing the President wants to happen is for the speedy passage of the budget to finance her 10-point program," Sen Aquilino Pimentel Jr said in a radio interview.

Ms Arroyo said the special session, dismissed by the opposition as a waste of time and unnecessary, proved useful in putting the country's fiscal house in order.

"It is a positive harbinger of this new year and marks the will and vigor of the executive-legislative partnership to take the side of the national hope," Ms Arroyo said.

Senate and the special session produced "remarkable results" despite the opinion of "political backlash."

The lateral attrition bill, also called the incentivization/reform Act, was approved on second and third reading by the Senate by a vote of 13-2. The bill provides a system of automatic yearly pensions for state workers in revenue-collecting agencies.

Barzaga said the bicameral conference committee was set to meet on Monday to approve the final version of the bill and the House may require to sign the measure into law within the week.

"The President was very happy because we were hosting Ge-Cabinet meeting (on Friday night) after she heard the news that the Senate had passed the lateral attrition bill, and the (members of the) Cabinet applauded," Barzaga said.

The lateral attrition bill would be the second revenue measure to be ratified by Congress. The first —which increased the excise taxes on cigarette and alcohol products at the so-called sin products—was signed into law last month.

Ms Arroyo had proposed eight measures to raise P60 billion in additional revenues to address the government's serious fiscal problems.

Senate President Franklin Drilon said the lateral attrition bill would institutionalize a system of attrition on those who fail to collect revenue or collection goals.

Sen Ralph Recto, chair of the Senate ways and means committee, said the "carrot and stick, human or the head" measure, would not only "kickstart lethargic revenue collection" but would serve as a "potent anti-smuggling tool" as well.

He said that under the approved finance version, employees of the bureau of internal revenue and customs would be entitled to 20 percent of voluntary collected in excess of the target set by the Development and Budget Coordinating Council.

At the weekly Kiri media forum, Drilon admitted that those who fail to meet the target set by their respective collection agencies would be floated to other government service.

Those affected, however, could still appeal to the Civil Service Commission or the Career Executive Service Board, he said.

Senate Majority Leader Francis Pangilinan said the ratification of the bill was a "victory for the taxpayers sector."

House Majority Leader Prospero Nograles also expressed confidence the measure would be ratified by both houses of Congress on Monday and signed into law by the President the next day.

During the three-day special session, the House was able to act on two more revenue-generating measures which called for a two percent across-the-board increase in the value-added tax (VAT) and the amendment to the proposed franchise extension of Tatad Franchise Act.

Both measures are expected to generate P68 billion in revenues for the government.

Solon says race tracks owe gov't P8.4B

A CONGRESSMAN yesterday urged the government to collect an allegedly outstanding amount of P8.4 billion in unremitted amusement taxes from race track owners, instead of imposing new taxes to generate P68 billion in additional revenues.

Rep. Alfredo Marañon III of Negros Occidental said it was ironic that Congress was working hard on the proposed new tax measures to improve the country's wealth-raising when the Bureau of Internal Revenue was "lukewarm" in the collection of unpaid taxes from race tracks.

According to Marañon, he had yet to see the BIR assisting efforts to collect the 30 percent amusement tax from race track owners which would augment the government's programs on agriculture, social services, health and housing.

Based on the computation of the National Tax Research Center, he said, the government has failed to collect the amusement tax since 1997.

Marañon said the Manila Jockey Club Inc. and the Philippine Racing Association Inc. owed the government the following amounts in taxes: P68,474 million in 1997; P1,329 billion in 1998; P1,220 billion in 1999; P1,376 billion in 2000; P1,775 billion in 2001, and P2,009 billion in 2002 for a total of P8.6 billion.

For emphasis that under the National Internal Revenue Code (NIRC), operators of racing clubs should pay 30 percent in amusement tax based on gross receipts. This is on top of the local amusement tax based on admission fees. —Cynthia D. Balana

How successful was Noli last year? Let us count the ways

By Jerome Aning

HOW SUCCESS is the Vice President in public service?

Vice President Noli de Castro yesterday listed his achievements last year in housing, overseas Filipino workers affairs and consumer prices.

As chair of the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council, he (Castro said he ordered the streamlining and simplification of operations of the key shelter agencies (HDC) to save on expenses, improve collections, and deliver quick and responsive service.

He directed HDC staff in the Home Development Mutual Fund or Pag-Ibig Fund, Home Guaranty Corp., National Housing Authority, National Home Mortgage Finance Corp., and the Housing and Land Use Regulatory Board to efficiently dispose of their non-performing assets in order to be more viable and self-reliant.

The HDCC, with the help of the BIR, expects to collect taxes from the sale of the 1,91,750 foreclosed lots with warranty of issues, 78,927 were in socialized housing. The proclamation of 31 area with a total land area of 354.67 hectares for socialized housing benefited more than 20,353 households.

The HDMF, from January to November last year, delivered housing assistance to 33,334 low officiaries of the Community Mortgage Program.

The Pag-Ibig Fund last year released P10.96 billion for the acquisition of 32,327 housing units under the end-user financing program. It also extended P952 billion as housing loans to 9,515 members. Another P1,515 went under the institutional financing program.

The housing sector also provided employment to 711,355 urban and rural construction workers.

As the designated labor adviser on OFW concerns, the Vice President flew to Tripoli in Libya on Nov. 26-28 where he successfully got the Libyan government's commitment to hire more skilled OFWs.

The Cairo visit also able to facilitate the resumption of the RP-Libya Joint Committee Meeting and the RP-Libya "oil talks."

He also represented the President in Somalia, Palestine, at the funeral of Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat who died last month.

De Castro worked to keep the supply and prices of basic goods and commodities stable last Christmas and persuaded traders and manufacturers not to increase the prices of goods.

TSUNAMI SURVIVOR

Jay Dacayo, who survived the tsunami that hit Thailand late last month, recounts his ordeal during the special Mass for tsunami victims held at Malacañang yesterday. Dacayo was a waiter at the Sofitel Magh Lagoon Resort and Spa on Khao Lak Island. His girlfriend, Kathryn Joy Lumadilla, a dancer at the same resort, perished. Dacayo recovered after two days and brought her ashes home last week. —PHOTO BY ...

Court names 3-man body to assess Naia 3

THE COURT which is hearing the Nois Terminal 3 expropriation case has appointed a three-man commission to determine the real market value of the terminal built by a consortium led by Philippine International Terminal Co. (Piatco) which the government sought to expropriated in December last year.

Named in the three-man body by the Pasay Regional Trial Court were a former secretary of the Department of Public Works and Highways, a former chairman of the Commission of Audit and a former Air Force officer.

In a two-page order, Pasay RTC Branch 117 Judge Honorio F. Grapanda appointed Dr. Cristino L. Pascua, former secretary in 1988-90 during the Aquino administration and a mechanical engineer; Salvador B. Enad, COA commissioner in 1992-99 and currently the director of the Philippine International Philippines; and Angelo L. Pangandaman, a former Philippine Air Force pilot and an aeronautical engineer.

"They were chosen because they are competent and disinterested persons," said Mary Jeanelle Obispo, the Pasay RTC branch 117 clerk of court. Jimmy Cayago

27 Pinoys arrive home from Iraq

TWENTY-SEVEN overseas Filipino workers based in the northern Iraqi Babylonian city of Mosul arrived in Manila last night after they were evacuated from the city at the Philippine Embassy in Turkey.

The Filipinos included Adyn Mateo and Cesar Arana, who were injured in last month's terrorist bombings of the American Embassy in Ankara in Turkey in the deadliest single attack on US forces in Iraq.

Eleven of the workers returned for medical reasons, the Department of Foreign Affairs said. Twelve others, who had earlier asked to go to Kurdish-held but obtained clears through repatriation by the embassy returned for personal reasons, including the requirements of their contracts.

The OFWs were employed by the Ashtar-based Strike Group of Companies, which documented their repatriation expenses, Ambassador to Turkey Elisa Catalla said.

They were welcomed on arrival by officials of the DFA, Office of the Undersecretary for Migrant Workers' Affairs and the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration. Jerome Aning

Dayrit: No 'meningo' in Metro Manila

By Jerome Aning

THERE has been no outbreak of the bloodied meningococcemia or meningitis in Metro Manila, Secretary Manuel Dayrit said yesterday.

Meningococcemia, which is an acute infection of the blood stream, is endemic in the country.

"The bacteria exists in the population. We don't see the germ (around) but it does not always cause disease," Dayrit said.

Dayrit carrying the measure meningitis bacteria could actually be healthy. "So there's no cause for alarm," he said in an interview over radio dzBB.

Dayrit said the cases of a three-month-old infant and a 26-year old tricycle driver, both under observation for suspected meningococcemia at San Juan de Dios Hospital in Pasay City and Jose Reyes Memorial Medical Center in Manila, respectively, did not necessarily mean the disease had reached the metropolis.

If it turns out the two cases are indeed meningo, the DOH still has to determine if the persons contracted the infection while they were in Baguio or from someone already infected and who had travelled from Baguio to Manila.

"We will trace the cases, track down their history, monitor the conditions of their kin and people they were in contact with or see any persons in front him/her spreading," Dayrit explained.

With reports of meningococcemia cases in Baguio City and elsewhere, the secretary described the country as being on "alert" status.

"It's like the typhoon signals, we have to be prepared for the onslaught of the storm," he said.

He predicted that when the cool season ends, the number of meningococcemia cases would significantly decrease within two months.

He said people with high fever and other flu-like symptoms should not immediately presume they have meningococcemia, especially if they did not go to Baguio or had any contact with someone with the disease.

"But if you're worried, take an initiative if you want. Although you don't really have to, especially if you've had no contact with an infected person," Dayrit said.

He encouraged the public to maintain a healthy lifestyle by eating good food, getting exercise and plenty of rest, so they don't easily catch the disease.

Just visiting, Erap says of his Cabinet

HONG KONG—Deposed President Joseph Estrada said an interview on Saturday that he had no hidden agenda in meeting with his former Cabinet in Hong Kong where he is recovering after knee replacement surgery.

"They were just visiting. There is no hidden agenda," Estrada told the South China Morning Post after half of his former Cabinet flew in to visit him at the Adventist Hospital.

"They are all my friends. They are my official family," said the 67-year-old, who is recuperating after surgery to replace both his knees.

Estrada's former Secretary Jose Pardo and ex-senator Francisco Tatad were among several former Estrada officials who visited the former leader here.

Reports of a new antigovernment plot emerged in the Philippines after top storm star and presidential challenger Fernando Poe Jr., a friend and supporter of Estrada's, died on Dec. 14, 2004.

The military in late December uncovered two colonels after allegations of a suspected new plot against President Macapagal-Arroyo's administration surfaced.

Estrada said the Arroyo administration was "paranoid."

"At the funeral of Poe, there were so many people, but in Makati ding, there were tanks with barbed wire. You can see the contrast," he told the Post.

Estrada, who is being tried on corruption charges, arrived in the luxury Peninsula subway on Dec. 27 for the knee operation accompanied by his family and several police officers.

It was the first time Estrada had traveled out of the Philippines since he was placed under house arrest in 2001 on charges of plunder for the country of $80 million during his 28-month rule. —AFP

Inquirer reporter to be buried today

THE BURIAL of former Inquirer reporter Noy S. de Guzman will be held at 2 p.m. Jan-8:00 after being in a crypt at the Our Lady of Lorem Church in Intramuros, Manila.

The interment will follow the 9 a.m. Mass in the church's second floor. Noy was 60.

De Guzman died on Nov. 13, 2004, of heart failure after several days in the intensive care unit of the Philippine Heart Center in Quezon City.

He was on the first batch of reporters to join the business in December 1980. He covered politics, the Metro National Liberation Front, the communist movement and the House of Representatives.

EZ2 SUERTRES SIX DIGIT 6/42 Lotto/Vis-Min SWEEPSTAKES

METRO
Editor Ester G. Olpoco • Assistant Editor Connie B. Bino

WPD top dog sniffs his way to greatness

By Lolita B. Saldaveria

THE member of the Western Police District (WPD) smartly walked up the stage, shook the hands of the mayor and presidential assistant before he received a round of hearty applause—and it did not matter that he was a dog.

Tiger, a 10-kilo, 1.6-year-old Dutch Shepherd was given a special award during the WPD's 104th anniversary celebration yesterday for his key role in the fight against drug trafficking and terrorism.

As a member of the K-9 unit of the WPD's explosives and ordnance division, Tiger detected the bomb planted outside the Commission on Elections office in Manila last year and another left on a passenger bus in Quiapo on Christmas Eve.

Busy as a dog should be

Tiger has also sniffed out hundreds of suspicious packages and regularly patrols the crowded areas of Manila like the Raymundo, LRT stations, Plaza Lawton, Road Avenue and Liwasang Bonifacio. He and five other dogs from Barracuda's Canine Training Services International have been with the WPD since 2003.

"This is the first time we gave an award to a K-9 operative. Tiger has performed well and he has helped Manila a lot," said WPD director Chief Supt. Bedo Dalusong.

Also given an award was his handler Bonifer Bocobo Bocing, who is one of only three people whom Tiger will obey. The other two are his owner and trainer Lito Barracuda and the latter's son.

According to Barracuda, Tiger comes from a new breed, the Dutch Shepherd. Only a few of these are bred every year and, as far as he knew, none are sold in the Philippines.

Wolf-like

Dutch Shepherds, he added, exhibit very wolf-like qualities like aggressiveness and bravery that make them ideal bomb- and drug-sniffing dogs.

"The more aggressive the dog, the better its will be at bomb detection," said Barracuda.

A bomb-sniffing dog is trained for six months and is taught to identify seven major scents of a bomb and its possible components, Barracuda said. The dog is also trained not to bark while examining the bomb or package and not to touch or move it.

"This is because some bombs are triggered by noise or movement, which is why the dog must only sit by the package when he detects the scent of explosives," he explained.

A doctorate

Barracuda said bomb-sniffing was one of the most difficult forms of training a dog could undergo, adding that it was the equivalent of a doctorate degree for people.

Bomb-sniffing dogs are very important because they alert expert to what to disarm.

Should a dog fail to detect explosives in a package, it could cause the death of anyone handling the package.

Barracuda said that while Dutch Shepherds were aggressive, these could be trained to attack only if commanded or if there felt the necessity.

Trained Dutch Shepherds like Tiger will not bite or bark at people, the dog trainer added.

Tiger showed no stage fright when he went up the stage to receive his award and pose for pictures with officials.

An actor, too

How could he, and thereabouts, refuse. Tiger is a TV, movie and even stage actor!

Aside from his law enforcement career, Tiger is also a performer, who has participated in 47 movies, numerous TV commercials and shows, and a Repertory Philippines play.

Tiger played the dog Sandy in the 1998 staging of the musical "Annie," Barracuda said he was very proud of this accomplishment because there were no rules or laws on stage dogs, and Tiger never scattered from his role.

He impresses way his performance that even former Presidente Corazon Aquino became a fan, said Barracuda.

In his performances, Barracuda boasted, Tiger had been a "take-one" talent, unlike actors he had worked with.

Tiger also starred in the movie "My First Romance," where his character was voiced by a parrot, as John Lapus. He also played Pinoy Pinocchio's dog in a TV commercial for a cell phone company. A Japanese film also had Tiger as one of its talents.

But for all these accomplishments, Tiger is also considered a member of the Barracuda family along with 10 other dogs. He has his duties, like going to mother with Barracuda when his task is to carry the basket.

"Tiger is part of the family. He and the other dogs we have are some of my sons's closest friends," said Barracuda, who admitted he is a soft touch for dogs.

In fact, Barracuda left his job as a bank appraiser in 1995 to go full time into dog training with three kennels partners.

Currently, his company supplies bomb and drug-sniffing dogs to arena ambassadors, shopping malls, bank buildings and offices of international organizations.

In 2003, he learned that the WPD had a problem with its dogs and he decided to lend the services of Tiger and five of his other dogs for free to the WPD for a whole year. The next year, Manila Mayor Lito Atienza awarded him a contract.

"I decided to give the services for free because I am from Manila and with all the bombings and terror threats, I wanted to do my share to help Manila," he said.

And Barracuda was not disappointed because Tiger has performed excellently in keeping the city safe, as his award shows.

SMART as a dog can be. Tiger poses for the cameras after getting his special award trophy during the 104th anniversary of the Manila's Police District yesterday. RAFFY LERMA

Caloocan City revives council for children

TO FURTHER protect and hone the welfare of children in Caloocan City Mayor Enrico Echiverri revived the City Council for the Protection of Children (CCPC), saying the government should give importance to the youth, including the neglected and abused.

"It is only right that we invest in their future," the mayor said.

Echiverri said the establishment of the council was mandated by Republic Act 7610, or the Special Protection against Child Abuse, Exploitation and Discrimination Act.

The CCPC is tasked to make and recommend plans, programs and policies for the well-being of the city's children aged zero to 17.

The mayor will head the council, assisted by Councilors Boca Inciong and Ma. Milagros Echevarria. Vina G. Salaver

Nazareno: A savior they can relate to

By Tarra V. Quismundo

THE LIKELY ones are expected to draw more people to today's feast of the Black Nazarene in Quiapo, in remembrance of an image of Jesus Christ suffering to save mankind.

Thousands of barefoot men bring the restless crowd in the annual showcase of Catholic devotion apparently because they could relate to the radiant Christ brought to his knees by a heavy cross, his head bleeding from a crown of thorns.

"There is not much difference every year, except that more people come here. I think because life is getting harder, and they would like to ask for blessings from the Nazarene," said Desiderio Bautista, president of the Comite de Pontejos.

For the last 14 years, Bautista has led the 75-year-old organization of Quiapo parishioners who organize activities for the famous Basilica of the Black Nazarene, Manila's parish simply known as the Quiapo Church.

Anxiety is the Comite's busiest month because it prepares for the biggest potluck event, the feast of the Black Nazarene.

Since 1936, when the Comite was just a decade-old, participation in the annual commemoration and procession has swelled up to its present organized chaos.

Year after year, Bautista, 58, has seen a constant growth in the multitude of his fellow devotees that gather in and around the church, and fill Quiapo's streets and traffic to accompany the Black Nazarene in his once-a-year procession around the city.

In today's celebration, and Bautista, at least 800,000 devotees are expected to join the procession, more than a third of them to be transported near the church and the quadrangle fronting it, Plaza Miranda.

Following tradition, only the men would be allowed to join the homogenous caste of white-clad devotees, crammed closest to the Nazarene.

But from safety, women devotees are advised to stay on the fringes of the procession.

"There is really no chance, but if there was, I guess it would be safety in terms of strength," said Bautista in an interview inside the Comite's office beneath the church's steps.

The chaotic hour-day procession has been celebrated every 9th of January. Its sheer magnitude had even worn out the original life-size image of the Black Nazarene, crafted by an unknown Mexican sculptor in the early 17th century and brought to Manila via a galleon by a nameless Acapulco trader, according to shoddy historical accounts.

What has been parading through the acts of devotion every year since 1907 is a hybrid of the original and a local replica. The Nazarene's head, by Filipino sculptor Genaro Mandagat, tops the original centuries-old and now cracked body of the image, composed by stubborn resin as a shield from further damage.

The original head is preserved crowning the nar of Manila's faithful copy inside Quiapo Church.

"They come here to ask for graces from the Black Nazarene, to help them lift their own life's burdens," said Bautista.

But devotee Bonifacio Billado, his yearly ironclad vow of joining the frantic procession of the Black Nazarene has meant disentangling for his life attach, though not well-endowed, has remained loonable.

"I do not work for anything material. I'm great wealth. I just ask him to keep me and my children healthy and safe," said Billado, a father of two whose devotion to the Black Nazarene began 16 years ago.

QC housing for workers rising up

By Tina G. Santos

SOON, a home of their own.

The Quezon City government has begun a low-cost housing project to benefit its low-income employees who still do not own their homes.

Two medium-rise buildings are currently being built on a 4,777-square-meter lot in Barangay Bahay Toro, near Visayas Avenue.

The project, called Pabahay Dormer II, is being developed by the Housing and Urban Renewal Authority, a corporation owned by the city government tasked to provide low-cost housing to the city's informal dwellers and poor government employees.

A total of 228 city employees are expected to benefit from the P73.6-million project.

Each unit on Floor 12 will measure 21 sqm and have its own toilet and bath, kitchen and individual electric meter.

Initial estimates show that each unit will cost from P280,000 to P330,000.

Mayor Feliciano Belmonte has called on city hall employees who do not yet own a house to take advantage of the project.

RP picked to head UN 'super panel' on terror

By Jeanne Aning

THE PHILIPPINES began its second year of membership in the United Nations Security Council with a bang, with Foreign Affairs Secretary Albert del Rosario Jr., the country's permanent representative to the UN, being chosen unanimously to head the new "super committee" on terrorism.

"Our selection acknowledges our role in the council during our first year of membership," said Baja, after being informed that the Philippines would chair the body's 1566 Committee.

"More importantly," he said, "the council's selection recognizes the contribution of the Philippines, under the leadership of President Maanopal Arroyo, to the national, regional and global fight against terrorism."

Resolution No. 1566, adopted by the Security Council on Oct. 8, 2004, calls for the establishment of a committee that would examine and submit recommendations on practical measures to be imposed upon individuals, groups or entities involved in or associated with terrorist activities.

Those measures, according to Baja, include more effective procedures considered to be appropriate for bringing those individuals, groups or entities to justice.

These include the prosecution or extradition, freezing of financial assets, preventing movement through the worldwide of UN sanctions, and controlling arms, ammunition and related material of terrorists.

The ambassador said the 1566 Committee is also tasked to consider the possibility of establishing an international fund to compensate victims of terrorist acts and their families.

This fund, he said, could be financed through voluntary contributions and confiscated assets of assets seized from terrorist organizations, their members and operators.

Apart from the meeting the 1566 Committee will submit its recommendations to the Security Council and coordinate its activities with those other committees on terrorism previously established by the body, namely, the 1267 Sanctions Committee on al-Qaida and Taliban, the 1373 Counter-Terrorism Committee and the 1540 Committee on Measures to Prevent the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction in Non-State Actors.

"We would now enter into the difficult negotiations for specific terms of references for the new body and guidelines for the implementation of its mandate by the 191 members of the UN," Baja said.

The Philippines took the decision of being the only member of the Security Council to hold two committee chairmanships and three committee vice chairmanships.

Baja's confidence to sit as chair of the 1566 Committee was based on the faith that the Security Council acted him to continue overseeing the committee in view of recent political developments that may enable the wrongful courses to emerge from being a failed state.

The Philippines is also chair of the DPRK Sanctions Committee, which was formed to make it difficult for terrorist groups to acquire weapons of mass destruction, and the Sanctions Committee on Liberia and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

MEMBERS of church and militant groups show their support for the strike of farm workers at Hacienda Luisita in Tarlac which has been accompanying violence. Now they fear a whitewash of the case. (AFP)

Luisita whitewash feared

By Norman Bordadora and Christian V. Esguerra

THE HUSBAND-WIFE Hacienda Luisita (HMF) ownership appointed team of a whitewash in the shooting and wounding of two striking farm workers at Hacienda Luisita in Tarlac on Wednesday.

The suspects were named, according to Willy Marbella, HMF spokesperson, after police at a security checkpoint failed to help the strikers as the armed suspects hammed them and then shot at the picket line.

The farmers said that when the policemen finally approached the suspects, they were already gone and dressed the armed men as "us".

"Does this mean that they know the residents and they were the policemen's superiors?" he asked.

"At the time of the incident itself, the police at the site had ignored the gunfire that the strikers had opened in defending the strikers from their assailants. Now Central Luzon police director Chief Supt. Rowland Albano says that it is their standard procedure to hide upon hearing shots being fired, but it is not always where the shots came from and who shot whom?" Marbella said.

The two victims are still confined at the Ramos General Hospital in Tarlac. Jorge Lorenzana has been declared out of danger while Ernesto Ramos is still in critical condition.

The HMF said the police even got the plate numbers of the suspects' Nissan Patrol vehicle.

Carl Anthony Ala, HMF public information officer, said the police found the vehicle's plate number as CLA 119, which belongs to an Ilocos property in Bulacan.

"Besides, how could the police see the plate number of the vehicle when they were hiding or was it their intent to [give] the wrong plate number?" Ala said.

He said the owner's plate number of the 1993 Nissan Patrol was TJA 119 and it was registered to Ramon de los Santos of 8107 Ilaw Circle, Guadalupe Viejo, Makati City.

"This is the guy that has to be investigated. What is his connection to the Cojuangco-Aquinos? Why are high-powered rifles like all issued to the barangay?" Ala added.

Meanwhile, the owners' daughter Ailaine de los Santos of the suspects in the latest Hacienda Luisita shooting has listed luxury homes.

At least six groups of civilians have volunteered to look for the suspects, according to Albano.

Task force the PNP/HMF named Albano said he was offering any valuable could name out of his pocket.

Police yesterday released a sketch of one of the gunmen, who stands at least 5'6" with a slim build and light complexion.

Marbella, a Mar Roxas loyalist, said Black Pearl, the wife allegedly one of four men who alighted from a Nissan Patrol and fired at Ramos and Loveland, witnesses told investigators.

"We're closing in on the suspects," Albano said in a press conference yesterday. "I've received calls from at least six people. They asked for my permission to form their own teams and look for the suspect."

Cops nab RP's 9th most wanted

Calling all San Juanans

THE SAN Juan chief of Investigation and Detective Management (SIDM) would like to flag general invitation on Jan. 15 on the CDP Building in Sucat, Parañaque City. For more information, the members may contact Lito San Juan Investigation Center no. (917) 7933837 or Baby SJ Section at 09174294888.

POLICE have captured the country's ninth most wanted criminal.

Emerson Abaoe was arrested the other day by the Cagayan Valley police and the Police Anti-Crime Emergency Response (Pacer) team at a house in Barangay San Joaquin, Peñablanca.

Abaoe carried a P600,000 bounty for a string of criminal cases, including the murder of his fellow village officials in Enrile on May 11, 2008. He was also wanted for illegally masterminding the kidnapping of businessman Bongsolito in Malig, Isabela, 10 days later.

Abaoe also faces separate cases of murder, illegal possession of explosives, and violation of the Omnibus Election Code.

Abaoe was the first person on the Philippine National Police's list of 20 most wanted criminals arrested this year.

Other criminals on the list are Conny Dirilgen, Fernando Ines and his brother Rolando, Oscar Manapsis, Jaime Sanchez, Ramon Ibañez, Raul Villar and Ben Romero.

The PNP began an aggressive hunt for fugitives when Director General Edgar Aglipay assumed office last Aug. 23.

Aglipay required each field commander to arrest at least five crime suspects every month to chart respective areas of responsibility.

Christian V. Esguerra

Fil-Am back on US ship ...

Front page, col 3

mother packed a few clothes and rushed to the base in Olongapo City, in streets flooded by a tropical storm.

Married to a Navy man stationed in the United States, Marlene carried an identification card, but the guards he threw through the gates and onto the USS Abraham Lincoln. The ship is called a 23-ship armada that mobilized 20,000 military dependents, children and civilian workers from the area.

Jocelyne, now a work and attendant, knew assistant aboard the Lincoln, remembers the long lines of evacuees, the kindness of the crew—and a monotonous diet of sandwiches.

After nearly a year in the United States living with grandparents, she and her mother returned to Olongapo, where Abaloos owned a bar frequented by sailors. But the US forces were pulling out of the country, Jocelyne's father had died, education costs were rising and the prospects of a job in the Philippines, even with a degree, were dim.

Following tradition

So after a year in college studying hotel and restaurant management, she followed a route time-honored traditions in the Philippines: she joined the US Navy, and found herself on the same carrier that had rescued her.

Today, the Lincoln, with Jocelyne aboard, is steaming at high speed toward the Somali coast, where pirates who commandeer had been obliterated and emergency aid that only the ship's helicopters could deliver was crucial to the isolated survivors.

On Kamanee Island, nearly 45,000 more people were recorded Saturday as rescue teams sifted through the debris of the island's dark province which was torn apart by tsunamis.

Death toll shoots up

The sacrificed death toll in Indonesia shot up to 107,029 while the overall death count, including fatalities from other devastated shores, neared 160,000.

Indonesia's toll has risen sharply in recent days as teams of rescuers recover corpses from previously inaccessible regions.

As the death toll soared, so too did the fists of sinking.

Sri Lanka, which more than 30,000 known dead, added 3,00 names to its ranks of sinking, for a total of 4,980. Indonesia, the worst hit country, estimated 10,000 missing.

In India's Andaman and Nicobar islands, 3,600 were missing and presumed dead.

Authorities held out little hope for rescue will missing. Officials in Sri Lanka and Thailand said thousands were unlikely to be found alive.

Sweden, Britain and France have warned they feared that nearly 1,100 of their citizens missing in the disaster were dead.

Dignitaries get in the way

Some humanitarian groups in hard-hit reels said the swarm of foreign dignitaries flying into the region were hampering aid deliveries.

Besides UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon and US Secretary of State Colin Powell, the stream of dignitaries included the foreign ministers of Japan, Britain, Canada, Germany and Norway, dogging diplomatic and slowing down relief deliveries.

In Sri Lanka, Annan visited a town Saturday where hundreds of shoppers at an outdoor weekly market were swept to their deaths.

Accompanied by the head of the World Bank, James D. Wolfensohn, and top UN officials, Annan inspected the battered southern and eastern coastlines which took the brunt of the monstrous tsunami.

In a rare positive note, the World Health Organization said no major disease outbreaks had been reported in the crowded camps where millions had sought refuge after losing everything.

Freeze debts

"It is normal after a catastrophe of this nature to have some disease, but they are under control," WHO Director General Dr. Lee Jong-wook said in Sri Lanka.

The world's top economic powers, comprising the Group of Seven leading industrialized countries, agreed to freeze the debts of disaster-hit countries to free up money for the massive reconstruction effort.

Rebel chief swallowed by tsunami?

COLOMBO—Hardee Tamil Tiger chief Velupillai Prabhakaran and his intelligence chief Pottu Amman are among the dead or missing after last week's tsunami disaster, state media said Saturday, quoting their own reporters.

Both senior lieutenants gave unnamed sources, who denied the report.

The island newspapers, meanwhile, reported that an opposition coalition "for a top LTTE leader" had been smuggled into a northern coastal dead.

The Tigers area inside a sanctuary carrying relief aid for tsunami survivors.

The LTTE slammed the Sri Lankan Broadcasting Corp. for spreading what the rebels said were rumors, saying it was "irresponsible and [dishonorable] of this magnitude."

Prabhakaran directs the struggle for an independent Tamil homeland and has a reputation as a fearless and ruthless guerrilla leader. AFP

The house would apply to bilateral debt between countries, rather than debt owed to institutions. Although the G7 also called on the World Bank and international Monetary Fund to assess the debts of national needs.

Where are the doctors?

Bad weather also stunted relief efforts, a heavy misfortunes rain storm in Banda Aceh caused more some of road and debris collected on the roadsides to collapse into the streets, refugees can be cross.

Heavy rains prompted Indonesian officials to suspend medical services in some areas.

In the United Arabs general hospital in Banda Aceh, which was battered by the waves, up to 30 of the 100 doctors and 80 percent of the nurses were killed or missing. Medical officials in the hospital are doing up to work when the hospital reopened.

In other affected areas, the United Nations has begun a mammoth effort to feed up to 2 million survivors of the disaster for six months, focusing on the most vulnerable, burning mothers and young children.

Many of the places where we work are remote, detached and their infrastructure has been dramatically compromised," Annan said.

The UN Children's Fund describes emergency rations of staples like rice and beans, tea, vegetable oil, sugar and canned fish.

US halts deportations

In Washington, US officials said they had temporarily halted deportations of undocumented immigrants to Sri Lanka and the Maldives and might extend the benefit to migrants from other countries devastated by the tsunamis.

Noncriminal migrants from other affected countries could request a stay of deportation but consideration on a case-by-case basis, they said. In

Alive after 11 days

JAKARTA, Indonesia—A 73-year-old Indonesian man has been found alive after surviving for 11 days under the rubble of his house that was demolished in the tsunami disaster.

Rescue workers uncovered Mohammad Zaini in a very weak condition at Bay ploughed through wreckage in Banda Aceh, the nearly flattened capital of Aceh province.

"The ground shook, the house's walls collapsed. It seems that I was floating as the water carried me away before a roof collapsed on me," Kompas daily newspaper quoted Zaini as saying.

"I no longer remember how I survived. I only drank water around me because I could not move my body."

Zaini, speaking from a military hospital in Banda Aceh where he was being treated for chest injuries, said he lost consciousness several times and at one point thought he had been fed by birds.

Nineteen Sin the survivor's corner with massive heartbreak as he lost his wife and six sons in the floods, Kompas said. AFP

Who eats fish in tsunami land?

Front page, col 4

every day. No problem," said WHO Director General Lee Jong-wook.

Lee said the widely held perception that fish were contaminated by the tsunami corpses would not in any way wrong.

"WHO advises people to eat fish," he said.

Desperate fishermen

Seafood prices plunged in Sri Lanka because of fears that fish may have fed on human bodies.

Desperate fishermen met Sri Lanka's President Chandrika Kumaratunga this week with a gift of fish. The same day, fried fish was served as a Cabinet meeting.

Fish is a staple for most Sri Lankans, and scores of seafood restaurants dot Colombo's coastline.

The tsunami that struck two-thirds of Sri Lanka's coast killed more than 30,000 people and destroyed the livelihood of many fishermen who lost their boats and nets. AP

Lovers no more, just 'friends'

Front page, col 5

the pair's wedding and after months of speculation that their marriage was in trouble.

Without wedding ring

Aniston has recently been photographed in public without her diamond-studded wedding ring, according to People, although the magazine said the couple had spent the New Year's weekend together on the Caribbean island of Anguilla with Aniston's former "Friends" co-star Courteney Cox and her husband, actor David Arquette.

Pitt, 46, and Aniston, 35, have been together since being set up on a blind date in 1998. They were married in a lavish wedding on July 29, 2000, on a Malibu estate overlooking the Pacific Ocean. Some 200 people attended the event, which included four bands, a gospel choir, fireworks and tens of thousands of flowers.

1st marriage

Part of Pacific Coast Highway was shut down to accommodate the influx of guests, which included actress Cameron Diaz and musician Sheryl Crow. It was the first marriage for both.

Until rumors began swirling that they were about to split, there were near-constant rumors that Aniston was pregnant. The actress had told People in 2002 that she and Pitt eventually wanted to start a family.

"Absolutely it will happen but probably not for a while," she said in the time.

Since their wedding, Pitt and Aniston have been teamed not only as one of Hollywood's most glamorous couples but also one of the film industry's most powerful.

They are co-owners of the Shine II production company with producer Brad Grey, who earlier this week was hired to replace Sherry Lansing as head of the Paramount studio.

'Friends' recognizable star

Aniston is perhaps the most recognizable star of "Friends," the ensemble show that concluded a 10-year run last year as one of television's highest-rated comedies. She also has starred in such films as "Along Came Polly," "Bruce Almighty" and "The Good Girl." Her father is veteran soap opera actor John Aniston.

Pitt, long one of Hollywood's most bankable film stars, is currently seen in "Ocean's Twelve." Other film credits include "Ocean's Eleven," "Fight Club," "Meet Joe Black," "Seven Years in Tibet," "Sleepers," "12 Monkeys," "Legends of the Fall," "A River Runs Through It" and "Thelma & Louise."

SUNDAY, JANUARY 9, 2005

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Sunday SPORTS

FEU loses coach, wins over ICTSI

Tortillos gain twice-to-beat advantage

By Jasmine W. Payo

THE BIG news overshadowed on the FEU Open Championship weekend is, ... even though winning a big win by Magnolia FEU.

Eric Bund won't be back as head coach of the Far Eastern University in this year's UAAP season, but that didn't stop him from steering the Wizards to their eighth straight win, a 72-68 drubbing of collegiate rival ICTSI.

Soon after, within the FEU Athletic department said Bund was ordered to step down due to fat referrals, which includes sitting in as assistant coach of Purefoods in the PBA.

The same sources revealed that Bund, who steered FEU to the 2002 UAAP title and the 2004 PBL Invitational Cup championship, was offered a consultant's job, but he rejected it down.

Former FEU and Purefoods player Alvin Caparas and former PBL assistant coach Robert Flores are being considered as possible replacements.

If indeed, this is Bund's final stint as FEU coach, he is winding up his job in a stylish manner.

"It's a good thing we were able to make a turnaround," said Bund, who appeared downcast despite the Wizards' feat. "In the first two quarters, we weren't working as a team offensively and defensively. There was so much pressure because we were playing in our hometown."

Mark Isip and Jason Rhodes led the Wizards' balanced attack with 13 points apiece.

In the second game, youngsters Joe Lozano ended in three-pointer at the end to 61-59 win to Gilt Gramey Green Tortillos past Toyota Otis-Letran, 69-67.

"I gave Jovino to Lozano to take a shot if he's free," said coach Jun Yan, whose Tortillos became the first of two teams to clinch the twice-to-beat advantage in the quarterfinals.

Hello rookie Philip Salmondel's seventeen performance with 20 points and 16 rebounds to power the Tortillos' come-from-behind victory.

"Remember we lose this January because we didn't play a game the whole December," added Yan after the Tortillos improved their record to 8-1.

After Lozano's trey, Tortillos playmaker Mac Belo ran a stroke of buzzer beater to help bring seventh to power to the victory.

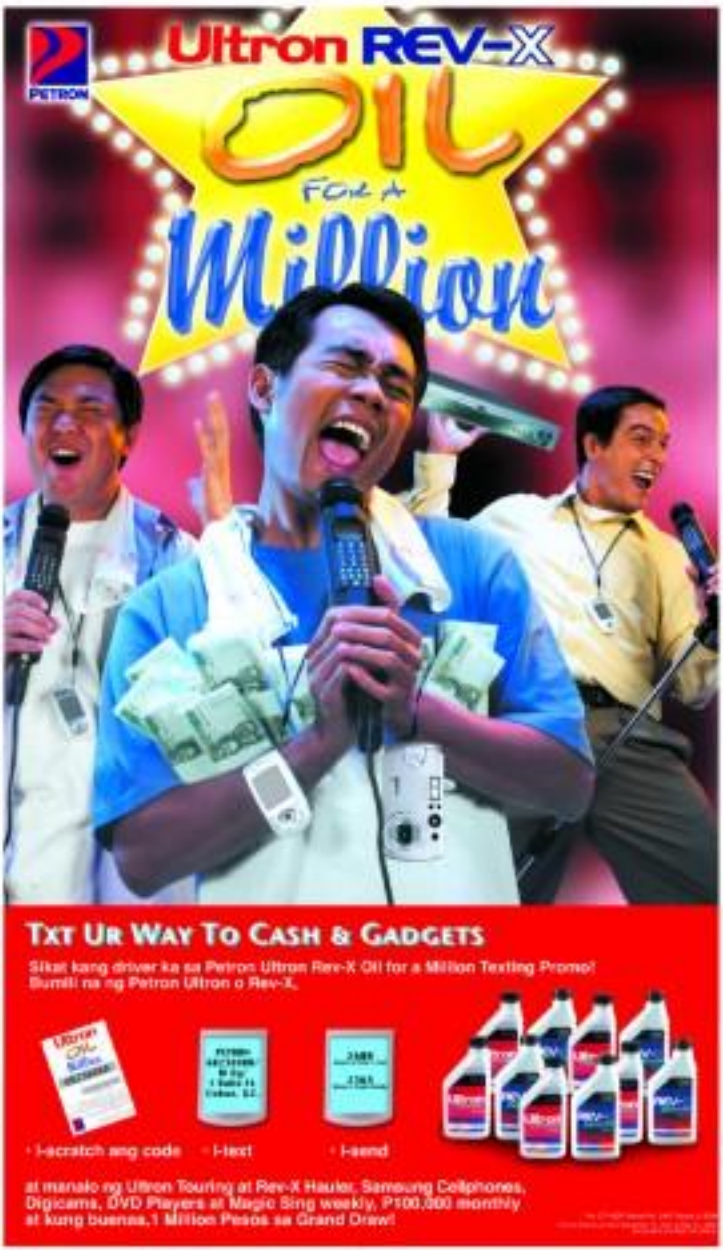
The Knights said the thrillers fell to 5-4, putting their quarterfinal bid in peril.

The Wizards remained within striking distance at 63-58 but outscored the Archers 12-5 for a 80-63 lead by the end of the third quarter.

The defending champions then maintained their strong shooting performance to build their biggest lead, 86-68, halfway in the final quarter.

With the 6-foot-6 Quillahan dominating the paint, the Tortillos drew within a point, 86-87, after trailing 81-29 early in the final quarters.

But the Knights zoomed again to a 67-55 advantage midway in the final quarter. Gramey Green then unleashed eight unanswered points capped by a 3-3 bonus triple to pull within 67-66, 1:23 minutes left.



VIS D' HONNEUR
The first couple toasts the New Year with the dean of the diplomatic corps, the Papal Nuncio Antonio Franco, during the annual Vis D'Honneur at the Palace on Friday, which was attended by the diplomatic corps and government officials.

WE COUNTRY'S top two officials, President Arroyo and Vice President Noli de Castro, greet each other at the reception.

Millionaire . . .

Pinoy page A-5

this stormy-haunted town.

And all at no cost to the government, according to Quezon provincial engineer Generio Pelayan.

"The owners of the construction firm, who wished to remain anonymous, was the first to respond to appeals for assistance in clearing the road of thick mud, boulders and flood debris, in record time. They even offered their equipment and skilled personnel for free," he said.

Isidro Johnson, a former engineer at the Department of Public Works and Highways, described the owner as a "philanthropist and religious man quick to make donations to charity and to build churches in Manila and elsewhere.

Pelayan said the man did not think twice about dispatching a crew and heavy equipment, including bulldozers, payloaders and graders, to the town.

Free labor, machines

Both men and machines are still camped in the area, and will stay there until the work is deemed completed.

The town of Real was among the areas devastated by the landslides and flash floods triggered by the series of tropical cyclones in November and December. Apart from the casualty count of about 2,000 killed and missing, the damage took a heavy toll on houses, farms, fishponds and highways and sanitation infrastructures.

Pelayan confirmed to the Inquirer in a phone interview that the man was indeed recipient for clearing the road in eroded areas in cooperation with the DPWH, the Quezon Provincial Engineer's Office and other private construction companies.

He said the delicate task of clearing the steep highway of mud using the man's own heavy equipment and skilled personnel was being done for free.

Asked why he was doing this, the Good Samaritan told the inquirer that it was just his way of sharing God's blessings.

Dangerous job

Pelayan said that while the road had been sufficiently cleared to allow vehicles to pass through Real and inbound or to Lucena, Laguna, Rizal and Manila and vice versa, the final clearing work was far from over.

He said that because of the steep terrain of the eroded Real highway, the dangerous job was being done gradually to avoid accidents.

"The workers cannot afford to commit a mistake in the clearing process because it can kill them or other people, or cause the equipment to fall into the ravine," he said.

Pelayan also reminded motorists along the eroded areas of the Real highways to be very careful. The weekend that more rains would result in more landslides.

Pinoys less gloomy in '05

Pinoy page A-5

had a margin of error of 3 percent.

Bair said the survey aimed to capture the "people's pulse" concerning the economy, family income and livelihood, government performance and other pressing issues.

Bair noted that the shift in outlook between the October and December surveys was slight.

2 key issues

"That's why we don't say [it] gone have become more hopeful. What we are saying is that [Filipinos, from no survey, just showed [them attend] to be less pessimistic. Is it the onset of Christmas? Is it because [it] gone is over so he [or] the notice gloomy? Maybe," he said.

According to Bair, two key issues dragged down the President's approval rating—the soaring prices of commodities and oil and the ongoing issue of vote rigging.

"I think in the past month there has been a big issue about price increases, and I think there is a perception that she is not able to address the issue," Bair said.

"There is a perception that she [Ms Arroyo] is not doing enough in terms of keeping down] prices, and ... that she is allowing people to enrich themselves in public service," he said.

Ratings plunge

Ms Arroyo's approval rating plunged in Southern Mindanao and Central Mindanao where to-questions were conducted. A 100-percent unsatisfactory rating.

The Caraga region gave the President's performance a 97.22 percent unsatisfactory rating, while Bicol's unsatisfactory rating was 86.36 percent.

Ms Arroyo's satisfactory rating were highest in Central Luzon at 14.67 percent and Central Visayas at 9.26 percent.

Pajas said the survey respondents were surprised at how people could judge the President as having performed poorly while pronouncing themselves best pessimistic about their economic prospects this year.

"In fact, many times in the past, the mood we got is that is so-called serious," he said.

Pajas said people had not yet connected the President's performance to the state of the economy, unlike during the impeachment and ouster of ex-President Joseph Estrada when people saw him as part of the country's problems.

Political opposition

It might also mean that the political opposition was not doing its job of broadening and directing the attention of the Presidency to the country's problems, he said.

"What this means is that in the minds of the people, the level of politicization of the economy, and the level of polarization of views in response to the President and the state of the country is not that intense yet," he said.

"It leaves her [the President] room to institute decisive reforms," Pajas said.

Some 34.23 percent of those surveyed said their livelihood had worsened, compared to 32.18 percent that said so in October.

And 64.2 percent said their family income was not enough to meet basic needs, a slight decrease from October's 66.29 percent.

But the number of respondents who said their family income was enough increased slightly to 13.2 percent compared with 10.61 percent in October.

Job opportunities

The survey also noted a drop in the number of people who said jobs were unavailable in their area to 23.91 percent from 35.85 percent in October.

Majority of those surveyed, or 64.47 percent, said livelihood opportunities were available in the area but that these were not enough.

Bair asked respondents to grade Ms Arroyo's performance as the country's chief executive. Under the grading system, 95 percent was the highest possible grade; 75, passing; and 45, the lowest.

The result was almost split evenly, with 52.98 percent giving her a grade of 65 to 74, and 42.99 percent giving her a grade of 75 to 95. Some 1.4 percent of respondents did not answer this query.

GMA's mean grade

Bair noted that the President got a mean grade of 11.46 among those who gave her a failing grade, and 77.76 among those who gave her a passing grade.

"It means those who failed her gave her really low grades, and those who passed her, [meaning] not [by] figure her a barely passing grade]," Bair said.

He said the next two months of January and February would be crucial. These are the months when Ms Arroyo must implement needed reforms, he said.

She must address the question of welfare and corruption issues like that of former Armed Forces comptroller Gen. Carlos Garcia, who is charged with accumulating P303 million in unexplained wealth.

The other results of the survey included:

- Charter Change was still highly unpopular with 57.40 percent saying they did not want to amend the Constitution. Some 35 percent said they were in favor of amending it while 27 percent said they did not know.
- Some 93 percent of respondents said the powers and performance of the National Power Corp. was unreasonable.
- Similarly, 83 percent said Metrobank and Manila Water's takeovers were unreasonable.
- Most Filipinos wanted a total big ban, with 80 percent in favor of such a measure.
- Majority, or 74 percent, went against a proposal to increase the percentage and expand the coverage of the value-added tax.
- Most Filipinos, some 52 percent, supported either status quo or mechanism or a price ceiling system on prime commodities and the regulation of the oil industry.

PNP links Islamic converts' group to Jemaah Islamiya

Front page A-1

Police Gil Meiko.

The suspects were then before the Manila Prosecutor's Office against Alipio Abato, Ahmad Esmaide, Yusuf Anas, Ali Nadin Ramdan and Momar Iskan Magley.

The case was released at around 11 a.m. yesterday for "humanitarian" considerations, given that three of them were women detainees said.

Sr. Insp. Jesus Salvigan, chief of the PNP-CIDG General Investigation Branch, earlier reported Eliza Faith Nino had ordered the detention of the five suspects.

Mendoza said in a phone interview that the complaint against the five was "based on the evidence" recovered during the Police raid.

"The [31] were brought to the Western Police District headquarters to determine who owns the [contraband]," he said. "And they were released within the prescribed [time] which are cardinal [from before any charges can or should be filed against them."

'Religious violence'

But Noli Pangalagan, secretary general of the Muslim civil society group Mamalsa, said the PNP was "fabricating religious violence" with the arrest of the 36.

"Muslims have never disturbed the Black Nazarene festival in Quiapo. We only watch the procession and focus on our fasting," Pangalagan told the Inquirer in a phone interview.

The Quiapo-Golden Mosque is less than a kilometer away from the Quiapo Church.

Pangalagan said Muslims normally gain nothing by causing violence during the procession as urbah hundreds of thousands of male devotees take part.

He assailed the PNP-CIDG for arresting people and presenting them as "terrorist" suspects without evidence.

"If they were really terrorists, how come the PNP did not even get their names right?" he said.

According to Pangalagan, one of those arrested, Dr. Arab Aguam [author named as Dr Arab Galaman], is the former administrator of the Quiapo Golden Mosque who used to host Muslim prayer rallies for President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Aguam is employed at the Department of Health's Research Institute for Tropical Medicine.

Pangalagan also said Alipio Abato was the nephew of Mohammad Abato, a former Philippine ambassador to Libya.

Nora Alonto, a sister of Magguia, told radio dzMM that her brother was a director of the Islamic Information Center and only wanted to preach the message of Islam.

She said that her brother was not a terrorist and that their brother was Ahmad Domocao Alonto, a senator from 1955 to 1961.

Asked on what the real reason could be behind the filing of alleged terrorist plot to disrupt today's feast of the Black Nazarene in Quiapo.

"The PNP investigation operation affirms the vigilance and readiness of our law enforcement agencies against the shock," Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said in a statement.

"The police are to be highly commended for the accomplishment," he said.

Mohammad, however, made no mention of the alleged plot to detonate a bomb during the Black Nazarene procession.

Bunye said that the government's campaign against terrorists would be accelerating "until they are brought to justice and our society is secure.

"The crooks will be neutralized and rushed down wherever they are, and they will not be allowed a moment of rest in the spaces to hide," he said. Julier Lobop-Arellano

Palace commends PNP for terror roundup

MALACAÑANG yesterday commended the Philippine National Police for rolling up alleged terrorist plot to disrupt today's feast of the Black Nazarene in Quiapo.

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Popular radio announcer

Pangalagan said Ahmad Iscandar, also among those arrested, was actually a popular Muslim radio announcer who used to chant religious songs in Arabic.

Pangalagan is also a member of the Supreme Council of Islamic Affairs.

Sunnis is a Muslim convert and an alleged leader of the RSTS/SSS.

"Now can Iscandar be a terrorist when he had been opposing the supposed terrorist groups?" Pangalagan said.

A PNP-CIDG report said Santos trained in demolition and basic warfare at an MILF camp in Lanao del Sur in December 2003.

It said Santos and his batch mates were sent on a "bombing attack mission" in Manila during the Labor Day celebrations in 2004, supposedly under the supervision of one Abu Saad, who turned out to be the Indonesian Fathur Rahman al-Ghozi.

Al-Ghozi was a senior Jemaah Islamiyah who was arrested, escaped, and was later killed in a shootout in Mindanao in 2003.

The report said Santos was given a "confirmed payment" of Mallie Tumao, Al-Ghozi's partner in carrying out the bombing of the Light Railway Transit on Dec. 30, 2000.

It said Santos set up camp for the RSBS in a family-owned LK Inn farm in Apia, Pangasinan in 2001 initially with 40 trainees, including Khalid Fransisal, a Muslim convert who was killed in a clash with police on May 1, 2003, in Tarlac City.

Subsequent training sessions supposedly included Redonan Cesar Delfina, the suspect in the May 2004 bombing of the Superferry 14, and Allan Rodriguillano, who killed a cop in Camp Crame before he was pointed dead by police policemen during a brief shootout on Dec. 27.

Lantern in a box

Supt. Romulo Sapitula, chief of the San Juan police, said he had received the Quiapo police's order to vigilant during today's feast of the Black Nazarene.

Around 1,200 policemen, volunteers and barangay guards will secure the route of the procession.

As if to heighten the vigilant mood, a bar left outside the Quiapo Church yesterday morning was explosives, express scrambling to check it out.

But the box was found to contain only a lantern.

Safety measures

Sapitula said a churchgoer's discovery and report of the box unleashed chaos as people were conscious of their safety and the things that they should be looking out for. *With a report from Alissis Pepa*

The WORLD

Lira Lorenzo B. Dulce

Aid workers laud UK's 'Marshall' plan for Africa

JOHANNESBURG—Britain's proposed "Marshall" plan for Africa could herald change in the poorest continent by harnessing compassion sparked by the Asian tsunami, but the obstacles must be matched by action, experts say.

Aid workers and economists on Friday applauded a three-pronged plan unveiled by Britain's finance minister Gordon Brown to stave off the debt crisis, dramatic reductions in subsidies and trade and a £1,000 million rise in poverty assistance.

"We welcome this as a serious attempt to harness all this wealth and heaven on our TV screens and focus the attention on poverty," said David Sanderson, regional head of Care International UK. "It could be a moment of change for Africa."

But experts also said the plan could end up in another round of empty rhetoric that will fail to address the ongoing poverty woes, the spread of HIV/AIDS and sound economic growth.

"We've heard this year after year," said Nigel Marsh, Edward Nathan Africa communications manager.

"There aren't any concrete empty statements or Africa will be in the same dire situation in 100 years."

Some aid agencies are worried the aftermath of the Asian tsunami disaster, which has shown billions in dollars per minute, companies and individuals, will eclipse Africa's daily struggle with war, famine and disease.

"We are concerned that the model of international attention and resources to the terrible tsunami disaster would mean that crises like those in Darfur, northern Uganda and Congo drop out of the international spotlight," said an Oxfam spokesperson in Lusaka.

Jacobson noted that US$1,000 sub-Saharan Africa died each month but were from AIDS-related illnesses, according to the United Nations. The tsunami death toll so far: 155,000 on Friday.

But Brown said the moment was a chance to galvanize a "passion for compassion" and to launch a plan for Africa on the same scale as the US Secretary of State George Marshall's initiative to rebuild Europe after World War Two.

Rob Bowen, who is due to visit southern Africa next week, said Prime Minister Tony Blair aims to put development high on the agenda as Britain holds the presidency of the G8 group and is host to the Gleneagles summit. Blair said Africa suffers "the equivalent of a tsunami nearly every month in some every week."

Ian Domingo, economist at Standard Bank in Johannesburg, said it was mixed information of effort like this was essential for the only concerted effort to provide cash on the line.

And he said the Marshall plan may signal a shift in attitudes in Britain and other rich countries. And to realize that in a globalized world, Africa is everyone's problem.

"Alot of people are raised but [want to] believe it is remote." he said. "What political capital do they get? Africa is not going to vote them out... I think that is responsible about the Blair and Brown championing this could make things happen."

While experts discussed plans to combat trade barriers, which deny African countries from exporting their goods, so that "level and trading rules on a level playing field, they raised some doubt over how far aid and even debt forgiveness would help. Reuters

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HBL ROSE Kennedy (center) is shown with three of her children, from left, Joseph Jr., Rosemary and John, in this undated family portrait. Rosemary Kennedy, born mentally retarded and who lived most of her life in an institution after undergoing a lobotomy, died Jan. 7, 2005. Her family said. She was 86. —

Rosemary Kennedy, sister of JFK, 86

WASHINGTON—While Rosemary Kennedy spent much of her life shielded from the public eye, her struggles with mental retardation inspired her sister to encourage millions of mentally disabled children to publicly celebrate their differences.

Kennedy, the third child of Rose and Joseph Kennedy, was born mentally retarded and underwent a lobotomy when she was 23. Her family says she lived most of her life in a Wisconsin institution, the St. Coletta School for Exceptional Children.

She died at Fort Atkinson Memorial Health Hospital in Wisconsin with her brother Sen. Edward M. Kennedy and her sisters by her side, the family said in a statement.

"Rosemary was a lifelong guide to every member of our family," the statement said. "From her earliest years, her natural empathy for those in need among inspiration to reach out and a powerful source of our family's commitment to do all we can to help all persons with disabilities live full and productive lives."

Rosemary Kennedy's condition became an inspiration to her younger sister, Eunice Kennedy Shriver, who founded the Special Olympics for mentally disabled athletes, and in 1968 she took over the sister's care after their mother had a stroke.

Rosemary's retardation became public in 1960, just after her brother John was elected president. The National Association for Retarded Children mentioned in a publication that Rosemary never "has a mentally retarded sister who is in an institution in Wisconsin."

The following year, Eunice revealed more about her sister's story in an article for The Saturday Evening Post.

Rose Marie Fitzgerald Kennedy, on Sept. 13, 1918, in Boston, she was known as Rosemary or Rose to friends and family. In her own childhood, she developed a life of her dreams, from Britain, trips to Europe and a visit to the Roosevelt White House.

But as she got older, her father was worried his daughter's mild condition would limit her considerations that could damage the family's reputation.

"Rosemary was a woman, and there was a denial fear of pregnancy, disaster and disgrace," author Laurence Leamer wrote in an unauthorized Kennedy biography called "The Kennedy Women: The Saga of an American Family."

Doctors told Joseph Kennedy that a lobotomy, a medical procedure to inhabit the frontal lobes of the patient's brain, was a hope that would help her daughter and calm her mood swings that the family found difficult to handle at home.

Rosemary lived in several private institutions before her father placed her in St. Coletta, an Indiana institution.

During the 1960s, Eunice watched Rosemary more in the lives of her siblings and their children. She attended family gatherings more frequently. AP

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Pentagon orders review of US strategy in Iraq

BAGHDAD – The Pentagon has ordered a top-level review of its strategy and of Iraqi troops after nine US troops were killed, just three weeks before elections.

US President George W. Bush sought to encourage high voter turnout despite the mounting insurgent carnage in the country.

"We're having elections on Jan. 30. It is a historic moment," Bush told reporters at the White House.

"I know it's hard for a reason, and the reason is that there is a handful of folks that fear freedom," he said.

Bush described 14 of Iraq's 18 provinces as "relatively calm" and added that in some "the normal ties are trying to stop people from voting."

The second-in-command of US forces in Iraq, Lt. Gen. Thomas Metz, told reporters Thursday security was lacking in four provinces to ensure Iraq's Sunni Muslim belt, but said preparations for the elections would be a success.

According to an internal state department poll, only 32 percent of Sunnis are "very likely" to vote and 88 percent said they would stay away from the polls if they feared attacks.

A US official said the findings were "not surprising," but said efforts would encourage the participation of Sunnis, who enjoyed power until US troops toppled Saddam Hussein's regime in 2003.

Administration aides, US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld is sending a second general to Iraq to evaluate the development of Iraqi security forces, a consequence of the US strategy to defeat the growing insurgency the Pentagon said Friday.

The mission, first reported by The New York Times, reflected deepening concern over the situation in Iraq, as rebels intensify their campaign to disrupt Jan. 30 elections.

The Times said retired Gen. Gary Luck's review will be "open ended" and include a broader look at US military operations, including US troop levels and the strategy for fighting the insurgency.

However, Pentagon spokesperson Lawrence DiRita said Luck would assess US efforts to train and field Iraqi security forces, rebuild Iraq's economy and enhance building performance has compared unfavorably with an Iraqi insurgency that appears to be growing in strength and sophistication.

A Pentagon official said rebels have been gaining more explosives into roadside bombs such as one that killed seven US soldiers on Thursday.

"We've noticed in the recent couple of weeks that the IEDs are being built more powerfully with a more explosive filled in a small- or number of IEDs," the military attitude for improvised explosive device, said brig. Gen. David Rodriguez.

The Bradley is around only to the M1 Abrams tanks rank in armored protection, set a roadside bomb in Baghdad killed all seven US soldiers aboard.

In addition, two marines died in the rebellio province province of Anbar on Thursday.

It was the largest number of US troops killed in a single attack since last month's suicide bombing in a military mess hall at a Mosul base that killed 22 people, including 14 US service members. AFP

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US sergeant acquitted in death of Iraqi civilian

FORT BOOD, Texas – Jurors at a court martial at a Texas military base Friday acquitted an army sergeant of manslaughter charges in the drowning death of an Iraqi civilian but convicted him of assaulting the man.

Sergeant First Class Tracy Perkins was accused of forcing Hatem Abdel Hussein to jump to the Tigris river in Baghdad as punishment for seeing a curfew in Samarra in January 2004.

But the defense argued it wasn't clear that the Iraqi civilian had died in the incident.

Army criminal investigators questioned during the four days trial in Fort Hood have submitted they lacked the resources to fully probe the alleged death.

The defense also argued that the causes of hostilities in Iraq forced US troops needed to find effective ways to deter crimes.

The six-man military jury convicted Perkins of manslaughter charges but convicted him of assault, which carries a maximum prison sentence of six months.

Also Friday, a soldier seen on the ringleader of prisoner abuses at the Abu Ghraib prison appeared before a military judge at Fort Hood, as his case's martial started with the selection of a 10-man jury.

Specialist Charles Graner is seen in several of the photographs soldiers took of themselves standing by naked Iraqi prisoners. He pleaded not guilty to the charges of maximum prison sentence of 15 and a half years.

Three former Iraqi detainees are to testify by videotape at the trial. Also on the witness list is Specialist Joseph Darby, who blew the whistle on the sexually humiliated prisoners photographs.

Graner lawyer Guy Womack said the defense would be based on the argument that Graner was "following orders."

He argued the prison guards had been encouraged to "soften up" prisoners ahead of interrogations, and insisted Graner "only gave the orders on the ones who should be set up, and not the four-ranking soldiers who have been charged in the Abu Ghraib scandal.

Womack said he expected officers "to lie about it," and said a number of others "are invoking their right to remain silent." AFP

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IRA linked to $50-M bank heist

BELFAST—Northern Ireland's police chief blamed the IRA on Friday for a massive bank raid in Belfast, an accusation that undermines efforts to bond both running of the British province to its divided Catholics and Protestants.

Britain and Ireland said the linking of the Irish Republican Army to the 26.5 million pound ($50 million) heist at the headquarters of Northern Bank in central Belfast last month was a major setback to their efforts to seal a final political settlement in the British-ruled province.

"On the basis of the investigation work we've done to date... in my opinion the Provisional IRA are responsible for that crime," Chief Constable Hugh Orde told a news briefing. He declined to give details of the intelligence that underpinned his assertion.

The IRA and its political ally Sinn Fein, the largest Catholic party, denied the guerrilla group was behind the raid, in which the families of two bank workers were held hostage.

Sinn Fein has often accused the mainly Protestant Northern Ireland police of bias against Catholics, and such Orde's accusations were a politically-motivated attempt to demonize the party.

"Hugh Orde's comments today are nothing more than... political-ly biased allegations," said Martin McGuinness, Sinn Fein's chief negotiator. "He has not produced one scrap of evidence. Within days of the robbery... I asked the IRA about this and was assured that they were not involved."

Protestant unionists, who support ties to Britain, seized on Orde's comments as evidence the IRA remained involved in crime and low-level violence despite the ceasefire it called in 1997 in its campaign against British rule. They called for Sinn Fein to be excluded from the political mainstream.

"When we were engaged in the talks process, the (Irish) government informed us that when Sinn Fein wanted to move toward ending its paramilitary and criminal activity" said Sam Foster last Saturday, leader of the largest Protestant party. "That is clearly not the case."

Mark Durkan, leader of the moderate SDLP Sinn Fein's main competitor for Catholic votes, said a "real blow" had been dealt to the peace process.

"The SDLP cannot see who else but the IRA would have the capacity to carry out such a large and organized robbery," he said. "IRA assets may have denied involvement, but on many of their denials have turned out to be lies in the past."

Attempts by London and Dublin to broker a deal to revive a power-sharing government at the future of a 1998 peace deal stalled last month. Agreement faltered over the issue of photographs of the IRA posing in sweatpant out of use.

Dublin's party, the Democratic Unionists (DUP), insisted this was essential. The IRA would not agree to a request it said was simply designed to humiliate republicans.

Irish Prime Minister Bertie Ahern called Orde's remarks deeply worrying. "The attribution of the... robbers to the Provisional IRA represents a serious set-back for the political process in Northern Ireland and is corrosive of the public confidence that we have been seeking to create," he said.

A spokesperson for Tony Blair said the British prime minister took the latest developments very seriously.

"He has made it repeatedly clear over the past two years that the political institutions in Northern Ireland can only be restored if there is a complete end to paramilitary activity by those involved, and that includes all criminal activity."

Northern Bank announced on Friday it would withdraw all its paper banknotes in circulation and replace them with new ones in different colors, at a cost of up to 5 million pounds, which would involve more than half the stolen cash worthless. Reuters

Trains collide in Italy; 18 killed

ROME—Eighteen people were killed and dozens injured Friday when a passenger train collided with a goods train in thick fog in northern Italy, rescuers said, in the country's worst rail accident in 23 years.

Two hundred firefighters, including a helicopter and dozens of ambulances, rushed to the wreckage scene near Bologna after the collision on a single-track section of line, close to the hologram di Crevalcore station.

"Some of the carriages were derailed by the impact," a spokesperson for rail operating company Trenitalia said.

The DS329 television news channel quoted firefighters from the nearby town of Modena from where back-up was sent as saying the death toll had gone up to 18—with many others injured in 4 deads killed 1 is.

A fireman earlier told the channel that the dead included the two drivers of each train.

"There are 14 dead for sure and very probably four other people who died according to what firefighters and health authorities at the scene are telling us," Raffaele Shiraldi, spokesperson for the Bologna local authority said.

He said there were "four or five seriously injured and more than 50 slightly injured," he said the nationality of the victims had not yet been established.

Rescuers was hampered by the fog, which led to dazed visibility as some 50 meters, and were struggling to cut people free from one of the wagons of the passenger train. AFP

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Manila Water

Water interruption notice

Portion of Quezon City and San Juan

These cut and plug activities will cause a temporary water service interruptions in portions of Quezon City and San Juan. The first two activities will occur in Quezon City and cause a temporary water service interruption in Bgys. Manresa, Immaculate Conception, Kaunlaran, Mariblue, Commonwealth, Lucas Ave., Sto. Domingo Bagg, Veteran's Village, Pinyahan 3, Dona Petrona, Pasig, Villa Basilio, Lanzo, Capitol Homes, Capitol Park, Bonifacio Village, White Plains, portions of Mariblue (upper portion), Centerville and Philand from 10:00 p.m., Monday, January 10, 2005, up to 6:00 a.m., Tuesday, January 11.

Meanwhile, the third activity will affect portions of San Juan. Temporary water service interruption will start 10:00 p.m., Wednesday January 12, 2005, up to 6:00 a.m., Thursday, January 13 and will affect Batong Bato, Salapan, Ermitano, part of Pedro Cruz and Rivera.

These activities are part of Manila Water's aggressive water improvement program to reduce non-revenue water and distribute more water to more areas.

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SMB faces Sta. Lucia; P'foods vs Coca-Cola

Best-of-3 Philippine Cup playoffs

THE WILDCARD phase of the Coca Manufacturing PBA Philippine Cup starts today with a twinbill featuring best-of-three offshoots at the Araneta Coliseum.

With the odds just about even, fifth-ranked San Miguel Beer collides with the eighth-seeded Sta. Lucia Realty at 4:30 p.m. before Purefoods Hotdog and Coca-Cola rematch each other at 6:30.

In the other wildcard pairing, Shell, which had one of their elite elimination round, and Alaska refurbishing hopes will enjoy twice-to-beat advantage against Red Bull Barako and Welcoat.

Sta. Lucia Realty, Purefoods and Red Bull finished with identical 10-5 records but the Realty crowned up with a superior quotient, leaving the Pioneers and the Barako tied for the last two seats.

Alaska, San Miguel Beer and Welcoat also ended up tied at 9-6 but still formed the bracket now applied this time.

The Aces went on to beat the Beermen in a one-game playoff for fourth at the Ynares Center in Antipolo last Dec. 31 sending them to an inferior position.

Sta. Lucia Realty coach Alfrancis Chua was hoping to be reunited against coach Tim Cone and the team in the wildcard first go-round, Joey Umbrico and the Beermen instead.

"I must admit that between Alaska and San Miguel Beer, Alaska will pose less problems for us," said Chua.

"But since it's San Miguel, we will just try to match up with them and get the job done," he added.

As far as matchups are concerned, the Beermen have a more versatile frontcourt and I-design bench.

Olsen Racela, Dondon Hontiveros, Danny Seigle and Bob Sanquez have the slight edge over the Kenneth Duremdes-powered wingmen of the Realtors.

Sta. Lucia however will have the advantage up front, where Marlou Aquino and Dennis Espino are expected to dominate Ali Peklaner, Jeffrey Cariaso and Francis Bakehouse.

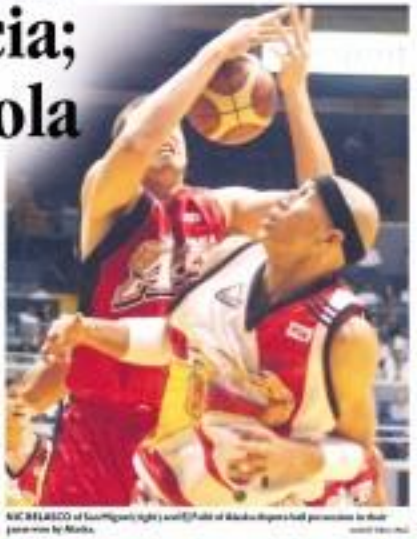
In the other game, the Tigers will have more experience, while the T3 Holdings boys to get their second gun game going.

Coca-Cola will be anchored coach Chot Reyes, who will now dedicate his time forming the country's national team.

The survivor of the San Miguel-Sta. Lucia Realty series advances to the quarterfinals and meets either Alaska or Welcoat in a best-of-three encounter. The winner of the Hotdogs-Tigers duel will be pitted against the winner of the Shell-Red Bull-Barako clash.

The quarterfinal winners will join the top-seeded Barangay Ginebra Kings and the No. 2 Talk 'N Text Phone Pals in the best-of-five semifinals.

Jane Navarro



JOE BELASCO of San Miguel's right guard (Paulo) of Alaska dispute ball possession in their game review by Alaska.

MISSING. I'll do my best.

Joey joining world meet in Montreal

BAGUIO RACE Thailand Open 120KM-00 champion Filipino Elli Regalio "Joey" Amores is will compete in the Montreal World Open Tournament slated on 13-22 at the Saint Laurent Metropolitan Center in Montreal, Canada.

The Cultivon, Oriental Mindoro native, who-all earn 43 seen awards, will join nine others contract players from the United States, Russia, Israel, France and Isel Canada in the same mixed-event tournament sanctioned by the World Open Federation.

"Depends to any host to, to any young tournaments to at young to," said Amores, ranked second in the country with an Elo-cup of 2039, good for No. 362 in the world ranking.

The Baguio Mambo native said he used to shortcuts down some wrestling and endurance, consist of the traditional pen and paper method.

GM Dmitry Jakovenko (Elo 2736) of Russia is the top seed in the tournament.

Also seeking perfect start are GM Alexander Ipatov (Elo 2657) of France, GM Viktor Bikhovsky (Elo 2553) of Israel, GM Alexander Lenige (Elo 2344) of Canada, GM John Bokenkamp (Elo 2327) of the United States, GM Eugene Torchinsky (Elo 2506) of the United States, IM Aleksandr Bhadrakul (Elo 2487) of France, Blumwell's 16-year-old IM Thomas Rombel-Rocque (Elo 2425) of Canada and 16-year-old IM Eric Lawson (Elo 2373) of Canada. – *MM Marlon Bernardino contributor*

32 PROS, AMATEURS

Chot's RP five takes shape today

By Jane Navarro

THE PLAYERS on the roster list of Philippine country basketball coach Vicente "Chot" Reyes will be known today.

Reyes will announce the 12 PBA and amateur players of his choice as the halftime break of the last semifinal bout of three series between Sta. Lucia Realty and San Miguel Beer in the reopening series Monday PBA Philippine Cup at the Araneta Coliseum.

The Coca-Cola mentor, who took a leave from his coaches hall duh, has now five manned Jeejoy Hrbertmoral, Willie Miller, Yeo Dale Cruz, Ric Rodriguez and Eli Ellorde to the first five of the nations of team.

He also mentioned Jimmy Alapag, Brandon Cabilay, Jimmy Yuhenseela, Lordy Tugade, Kenneth Duremdes, Dennis Espino, Mark Telan, Billy Mamaril, Danny De Guzman and Kenny Thien to among the possible can play-ers and support group to the trainees.

Reuyen Rosado, Dennis Seigle, Enrico Villanueva, Ali Peek, Rino Pogoy and Rafi Reavis were also included in the tentative roster of what Reyes said would be a young and talented squad.

"In my mind, I don't think it relevant to mention any favorites, then will be unconvened and screened to determine the extent of their commitment to the national team," said Reyes.

The selection procedures actually starts today from the commence practice of building up upon 30 seeds by PBA players aspiring to be part of the national team. It was done on the past four terms Gomez But The PBA handled.

"I know how these players play. It's just tentative of putting the right players who could play as a cohesive team," said Reyes, stressing that pooling together a bunch of superstar for the national team is no longer effective.

He cited the United States basketball team composed of NBA stars who were humiliated by Argentina and other budding basketball countries in the Athens Olympics last year.

Reyes also included at least four new, more players in his initial list. They are Asmaco-IA Rincon, Lyndon Ebbe Cordona, Arsenal Ivanova of FEU and Wilson's defender Washington.

"There's a very distinctive awareness will make the final lineup. But I want them to continue playing and fit come. This is a long program and you never know what will happen," said Reyes.

The announced pool to be composed of 20 pro-jobbers and an assistant to be identified within the month, will start its training session on Feb. 1.

There are also other notable PBA players Reyes failed to include in the tentative roster that could be given a second look.

Coca-Colers Asha Ange has expressed and is joining the team. Shoe-Mart Mike Cortez and Jeffrey Cariaso have been disarming out outstanding games, while Brgy. Ginebra's Jayjay Helterbrand have been explosive recruits.

Bobby Ramsowell of Purefoods and San Miguel Beer's Olsen Racela, Dondon Hontiveros and two-time MVP Danny Ildefonso could also called depth to the national team bound to compete in the Asian championships in September.

"Let us not forget that coach Chot Reyes based his choice on the performance of the players in the ongoing PBA conferences," said PBA Commissioner Rey Eala.

"In essence, this conference is already the season for the national team itself," he added.

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"The task at hand is enormous, but with the right attitudes and approaches, a things can become easy," Obet said.

As the country's point man in the cyclist's biggest sports spectacle held every two years, Obet will have to make sure no single link mars the SEA Games debut and during the two-week competition.

"Sadly, all the committees are in place," Obet said. "I am particularly impressed by the work ethics of Steve (Rosenberg), who really puts his heart in every detail in regard to the preparations for the Games."

His hard-earned of governance accumulated by over his perceived foes, Obet has made a name in a million words, who does not stop till perfection is achieved.

Obet said a major term changed the course of his career after Bruce Aquino's recommendation at the tie-ins in 1981.

"I became an active Brazilian officer during the 1986 snap elections," Obet said. "When Marcos was finally toppled, I was made OIC-provincial of Bulacan."

He said he reluctantly obliged to Ilaw's granddaughter. He was 30 then, at most a rebel-not yet on the top of the corporate ladder.

"I was running for the GSC post as Dadiver sabya politics beckoned," said Obet. "When I left Diadevers, my friends said, 'You are a fool to join the government. Your future is ruined.' I ignored them. I followed my heart."

Today, he says he has never made a better decision in his life.

"To my surprise, I was unopposed," Obet said.

As his legacy after finishing the term as Chief-in-a-manner as governors for a total of 12 years one at the capitol, Obet has turned Bulacan into a tourist town north of Manila. Easily, he got a slot in the administration's economical ticket but just the last booth to Susie Ortiz by pinning Chiz in his first crack at the booths in 1995. He lost twice in his own try at the Senate in 2004.

"I guess, I am not destined to become senator," said Obet, who now found himself being named to two Cabinet positions, the last one as Tourism secretary.

Following his appointment as the big boss of the SEA Games Organizing Committee, Obet became concurrently president and chair of the Philippine International Trading Corporation. And, despite his brain-wracking job as the SEA Games, he still manages to work wonders at PITC.

"Modesty aside, we have consistently lowered the prices of medicines nationwide," said Obet. "I'm glad the big players are cooperating."

The SEA Games budget has been originally pegged at P2 billion. It is now down to P600 million.

"In the last interest of government, we will not accept and we would be looking for budget for the Games," Obet said. "Despite the bad times, our friends from the corporate world have not really deserted us. Truth is told, Nestlean spent $300 per athlete in 2003. Today we are looking at a $50-per-athlete budget for the 2005 Games. We also intend to have a plan sign to the end of the event."

It's a gargantuan job Obet is facing. But a seasoned fellow that he is, with a huge marketing background looking up his course, Obet, 58, is heavily trained to handle the biggest challenge that he in his life.

"I've never encamp from a fight," he said. "This one is tough. I like it best when the going get tough."

Unrated active chess gets going

THE METROPOLITAN Chess Club (MCC) United active chess starts at 10 a.m. today at the skills headquarters at the 2nd Divine Bldg., 907 Aurora Blvd., near LRT-2 Betmor station, Quezon City.

The event offers a total pot of P10,000, with the champion getting P5,000. Early winners are Jim Miguel Gaban, Jessica Lobos, Jan Emmanuel Garcia, Vernon Lobos and Rocco Francisco. Interested parties may call MCC at 426-1623 and 911-1809. – *MM Marlon Bernardino, contributor*

SURF CHAMP. Pablo Paulino of Brazil shows the form that clinched for him the 2005 Billabong Pro Mundial Championships title in Sydney on Saturday.

Battle Royale to showcase Gabi-Chipattana showdown

THE PHILIPPINES newest boxing program, Battle Royale, will showcase two of the most exciting bouts ever.

An adrenaline-pumping 10-round fight between Filipino-Israeli Gabriel "The Prince" Gabi and Thai Thepparit see Chipattana will be aired over SBN-4 at 6 p.m. today.

This fight is said to be one of Prince Gabi's first fights in his six-year boxing career. Gabi is now preparing for a crack at the featherweight title held by the WBO, IBF or WBC.

He is also being watched out by Filipinos in the US as his first contender appearance Brian Villorente. Villorente is a Filipino boxer who is now an American citizen who played for the UH at the Sydney Olympics.

The bout between Rey Manliguez of Baguio, Bicol Celebrity and Ryan Barroga would also be featured.

Smart RP Ladies pits teen stars

IT'S GOING to be a case of teen aces when the latest Philippine Ladies Amateur Open golf championship tees off next week at the Manila Golf Club course.

The year's edition features one of the youngest fields ever in the history of the national ladies championship with at least 20 junior players joining the hunt for the crown starting Thursday, Jan. 12.

And some of them are high up in the list of invitees.

Foremost among the youthful entries are defending champion Wanson Bendal, a 17-year-old Amateurs.hemsidan with Filipino parents, 18-year-old local jumpoff star Jazvic Aguio and 17-year-old Thai Somkaya Swasuong, considered as one of the best amateurs in Asia at the moment.

At the close of registry, there were 80 players in the main including 18 from seven nations. Five are members of Singapore's national team, three came from Australia and Thailand, two each from Malaysia, Hong Kong, Korea and the United States.

According to Nancy Ortiga, president of the organizing Women's Golf Association of the Philippines, 31 of the participants are single-digit handicappers which is a record high for the annual tourney given major backing by telecommunications giant Smart Communications.

"We're in for a very exciting competition with such young talents of amazing and talented players participating," said Ortiga. "This, I believe, is a good indication that more and more girls are playing the game in the region."

Anny Rosales, now an LPGA star and the event's only five-time champion, has been invited to lead the hitting of the ceremonial balls on Wednesday.

The 18th Gentlemen Foundation and Ucma Group and Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office are the major sponsors. Hole sponsors are Pacific Online, Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. (Pagcor), Bob Ueno Jewellers, Rockpoint, Bank of the Philippine Islands, Gold, Double Dragon, Mega Magnetic, Callaway, 88 Transport Network, Chenille Gallery, Key Stone Lamps and Sentry. The hole-in-one sponsors are Gucci and Russin&Bloxham Timepieces.

Looming as potential threats are the two Koreans, 23-handicapper Woo Ji Hyun and 4-handicapper Yoko Yeung Yeung, who are top members of the Hua Hin Thailand Federation.

The local jumpoff army challenging the foreign stalwart includes Jeboni Hasbing, Debbie de Villa, Crystal Saponi, Cara Rodriguez, Mia-an Legaspi, Regine de Guzman and Cristina Pascasio.

PAWC Cardona (center) of ICTP tries for balance against Arwind Santos and Mark Isip of Magnolia in their PBL game at the PBA gym yesterday. Story on A19 ALEX BADAYOS

It's Baguio, not Clark, for RP bets

By Marc Anthony Reyes

INSTEAD OF a new national training center in Clark Field, Pampanga, Philippine Olympic Committee president Peping Cojuangco will concentrate his efforts in improving the powerhouse-owned sports facilities in Baguio City.

This developed after a recent request by President Macapagal-Arroyo that the national athletes' home be transferred from the 70-year-old Rizal Memorial Sports Complex in Manila to the existing sports complex inside Teachers Camp in the country's summer capital.

"I will have to coordinate with (Philippine Sports Commission chairman) Jolly (Gomez) Bautista (regarding this) and explore the possibilities of how to improve the facilities there in Baguio," said Cojuangco yesterday.

Right now, only the national track and field and wrestling athletes are housed in the Baguio City complex, which rests Cojuangco's preference for an ideal training site for the national athletes for hosts the coveted SEAG and Philsports in Pasig.

However, POC officials said a lot of work remains to be done to the Baguio City facility before it can accommodate the more than 500 national athletes to be trained there for the coming SEA Games in November.

According to Jose Romeo multigold medalist Lorenza Bolaños-Galvez and Arnold Ferreras had completed of their deteriorating Baguio quarters last last year.

They said screens are needed on the windows and doors to repel mosquitoes. They also complained of the lack of dryer for their clothes because drying their training uniforms takes time due to the wild and damp weather.

Cojuangco said Baguio would be an ideal place to establish the ruggedness training center because of its high altitude and isolated location.

President Arroyo had installed the national athletes on top of the agenda of the sports leaders during her meeting with them last week.

Gomez promised to increase the national athletes' daily P650 final allowance and give them a fresh set of training uniforms.

First Gent, Pagcor heed caddies' call

FIRST Gentleman Mike Arroyo and the Philippine Amusements and Gaming Corp. headed the roll of the 2005 National Caddies' Open (NCO) with pledges of hefty support for the event that is the first of its kind anywhere in the world.

"Maybe we can find the next Ben Arda from within the (caddies') ranks," Arroyo, also the chair of the Ex Sports Foundation, said tournament chairman Ben Arda and Hermie Esguerra.

Chair Allen Gerardez also guaranteed Pagcor's support for the 72-hole event slated in Calamagan, Catalunga Heath and Witch Which Hunt on Feb. 3-4.

Along with executive director Antonio Arevalo and tournament director Tommy Manotoc, the NCO has decided to name the trophies after former caddies who made it big here and abroad.

The group has invited Frankie Miñoza, who once earned huge at Del Monte before becoming the country's foremost pro, and Anita to grace the event.

"We want the caddies to know that they can still change their fortunes," Esguerra, the champion two-homewear said.

Golf clubs are coordinate with the Caltagan office of the tournament through Jerry Fernandez at 0917.8622075, 0917.8422527 or his number 09195470002. Questions can also be e-mailed to the national caddiesopen@yahoo.com.

The deadline for submission of entries/forms is on Jan. 31. The forms may be found at 725.4006 or 0919. 5470002 or sent by courier to the Witch Which Golf and Country Club, c/o the office of the club president and to the Calamagan Golf Club in Batangas.

DON BOSCO CAGEFEST: The Don Bosco Mandaluyong Alumni Association launched recently the Don Bosco-St. Alumni Basketball Cup in honor of Fr. Miguel Bañares (about to throw the ceremonial jumpball). The tournament was hosted by this year's silver jubilarians DBTC HS Batch 1980. The Grand Alumni Homecoming has been set Jan. 29. All Batch 80 members may call Boy Ortiola at 0918-9125215 or 744-2611 or Joey Ocampo at 531-4222.98.

Beach volley on TV today

GOLF Ocean today resumes its special three-set with the Toyota Billboard Women's Beach Volleyball Challenge with the elimination round match between University of Asia and the Pacific and College of St. Benilde 3 in the collegiate division.

The match was played recently at the Cuneta beach volleyball court of the Cuneta Sports Center in Pasay City. Cool Power is aired every Tuesday at 3 p.m. on BPN-9 and is followed by the popular boxing show Samsung's Thrilla at 4 p.m.

Today's boxing feature is the 80-lb weight championship match between champion Arry Pabuhay and challenger Federico Catabay held in Cagayan de Oro City last Monday.

Luat beats Parica, joins Reyes in winners' bracket

RODOLFO "Boy Santacon" Luat beat US-based Jose "Kissing" Parica, 11-7, to an all-Filipino showdown yesterday to join countryman Efren "Bata" Reyes and Ronnie Santiago in the winners' bracket of the US$ Pro Tour Championships at the Bicycle Club in Bell Gardens California, USA.

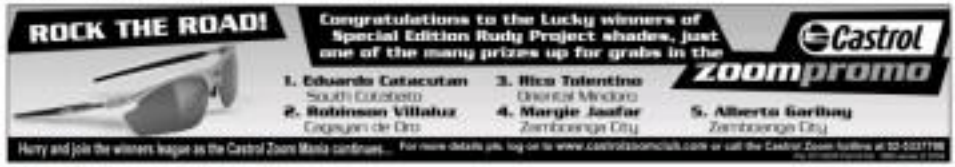
The 47-year-old Angeles City-based Luat will next meet American Gabe Owens, who drubbed Benny Kapkenduli, 11-2.

Reyes is scheduled to meet his new sister Shield champion Johnny "The Scorpion" Archer of Atlanta, Georgia, USA at noon time.

On the other hand, Quezon-born Santiago of North Tarrant, California, will dig it out against American Danny "Delicious" Basuluto, who ripped Francisco "Django" Bustamante, 11-7/6.

Other matches pit Tony Frank against Rodney "Rockem" Morris, Tony Robles vs. Mike Davis, Fred Peter vs. Hall "Stalker" Isaacson, defending champion Mike Sweeney vs. Jennifer Hernandez and Corey Deuel against Charlie "The Ravens Dragon" Williams.

Marlon Bernardino



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OPINION

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The summit

AT FIRST, the very idea of a one-day post-tsunami summit seemed outrageous: a gathering of politicians whose politics seemed irrelevant. But the event, a concept that came naturally to the diplomats of the Association of Southeast Nations, turned out to be necessary after all.

To be sure, the most pressing work of the next few weeks remains the coordination of relief efforts, and the international conference, held in Jakarta last Thursday, was anything but a coordinators' meeting. As a skeptical European ambassador in the region commented: "We don't need a donors' conference; we need a logistics conference."

EDITORIAL

To date, more than $4 billion has been pledged to the relief campaign; turning pledges into cash or goods, then distributing them to the 5 million people estimated to have been displaced by the Dec. 26 earthquake and tsunami, requires an enormous amount of coordination.

And two weeks after the cataclysm, relief operations have stumbled on a new but not unexpected problem: in a government vilified in Sri Lanka and in Aceh home to a secessionist rebellion, the Western armed forces now active again. The situation in Aceh, the western-most part of the sprawling Indonesian archipelago, is complicated even more by the presence of relief teams sent by supporters of Abu Bakr Bashir, the jailed Muslim cleric said to be the spiritual leader of the radical Jemaah Islamiyah movement.

But the summit was needed just the same. Organized by the Asean with remarkable speed, the conference helped reassure the governments of the affected countries that help was not only on the way; it would continue in the short term. The Jakarta conference also preserved UN Secretary General Kofi Annan with the right forum to make the hardest of sales pitches: an unsubtle reminder to the donors to redeem their pledges, at least the first billion dollars, immediately. And during the summit itself, additional pledges were received.

In all likelihood, the summit will be remembered more for its decision to set up an early warning system for tsunamis in the Indian Ocean, similar to the network already in place in the Pacific Ocean.

Thailand proposed that some of the relief money be used to install the system; the earlier it is set up, the better for the tourism industries in the area, which attract millions of visitors a year. But it is likely that the system will be built using other funds; this is much the better choice, because every single cent of the money raised for relief must be spent for relief.

This will mean that setting up the system of alerts will take a little more time. But unlike the victims on the ground, close to on the side of the early warning system. The magnitude 8.1 earthquake off Sumatra was actually detected by various institutes, including the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center in Hawaii and the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty office in Vienna. But there was no one in the affected countries to receive the information. In other words, a similar earthquake or tsunami in the same area can already be detected; the problem is the absence of a local emergency infrastructure.

But perhaps the summit's best work was promoting debt relief for some of the affected countries. The high-level discussion last Thursday must have helped add momentum to the campaign led by the United Kingdom to convince the world's most industrialized countries to offer temporary debt relief to the stricken. By the weekend, UK Chancellor Gordon Brown was able to announce the policy as a G-7 consensus, and confidently predicted that other members of the so-called Paris Club of creditor countries will soon follow suit.

The amount involved, according to Brown, is almost equal to the total value of aid pledges: some $4 billion. The debt relief may be temporary (possibly a year), but the impact will be longer-lasting. Some of the affected countries are among the most heavily indebted in the world: Indonesia owes $132 billion, India $104 billion, Thailand $59 billion. As a proportion of gross domestic product, the debt numbers are even more staggering: 80 percent for Indonesia, 59 percent for Sri Lanka, 46 percent for Thailand, 45 percent for the Maldives.

Debt relief, however short-term, is the international community's best form of aid.

A spiteful and envious mind

I RECEIVED many verbal congratulations for my article "On turning 80" (PDI, 01/01/05) from contemporaries who were happy to see, or send me a warm "welcome to the club" of advanced senior citizens. Then and I was slow to understand the thrust in the sexually-tinged gibes or congratulations, like allowances for loss of memory and occasional infantile behavior as to normal childhood.

Then it dawned on me, and I guffawed in my usual hearty laughs. I really enjoyed their greetings and sincerely thanked them for joining in my happiness. They showed me that conviviality, more than talent, loves company.

One reader, however, was not equally pleased. In fact, he was resentful and inspired to write Senator Tolentino. He said: the article "gave (him) the impression that (I) seem to profess to self-hatefulness, expressing pessi, contradictions and self-satisfaction in (my) many incongruities."

Could it help if I remind the hurt many elders as do "We and We who did not make the grade left other crawling your trail?" he lamented. "Your argument here must be for being Tolentino! ... The truth is that the lives of those Tolentino are made more miserable because the people like him could not make the grade to allow them to forget the successes of some of their contemporaries."

Fair of such successes, he concluded in a paper of envy and selfishness, "spells LUCK," he says, "as opposed, although to (be) not so much my ego, I cannot claim my credit. I should not be so egoistic, he said, if I had not been just lucky for being "in the right place at the right time." (Like being the thirteenth visitor to a fair?)

I suppose this was a happenstance for his not my ego, which is why he felt so frustrated. My first impulse on reading his letter was to throw it in the trash can where it belonged. In second thought, however, I decided to write this reply and exercise, if I can, the bitterness that seems to pounding in his mind's soul.

The unobvious impression he got from my article is his, not mine, not did I give it to him. If he felt deprived and excluded, that is his problem, not mine. Contrary to his accusation, I was not showing off for that is not in my nature. I was merely expressing some of my pleasant memories and sharing them with my readers, whom I consider my friends.

It is the pleasure of old people to recall the days when they were young and vigorous and full of hope and ambition. The persons lose her, seem a pleasure and the future is a time they can only await but no longer anticipate. Memories, especially the cherished ones, are like oases from the past that enable them to re-live the adventures of the vanished years.

They is what I felt when I looked back in my article. There was no malice, wished purpose to conquer myself with others without similar recollections.

The exaggeration that my meaning was to make others feel miserable for their failures is an inane malediction. Only the malicious can entertain such a cruel thought. The writer of this letter must possess the worst inventory humans being and suspect that everything a person does is aimed to lessen his inferior complex. That is when he has convinced his of with his shattered mind.

Rather than rejoice with me for my fond memories, he has decided that I am a shallow person without feelings for others. He considers myself with colors and put them in a cruel light. I do not even know who those others are, what he describes as their failures, and what I should or should not do all. He he would make me the ultimate evaluator for saying I am lesser than those others who should be ashamed of their failures.

Most of us think of the less in people (except crooks in general and politicians in particular), but the person who writes this letter is an object case worthy of pity. He knows who fields that misery genders set contrasts but inventions. So must be a lonely man. As he has revealed that he is spiteful and unwilling to see others enjoy themselves, he will be, the chances are, somewhat friendless.

I thought at first of replying to him privately so correct those ugly thoughts that are cramping his heart and mind. I have decided, however, to do this in this column, just in case there are some who think as (he) do but don. The many other lesser. I have received on that article were cheerful and affable, but there may be one or two like him who are lurking in the shadows. I hope they will see the light even if he does not.

Hope whisperer

MOMENTS

Fr. Jerry M. Orbos, SVD

I AM sure you heard the story about the three-foot who died smiling? The first one was an American who ate plenty of steak and died, happy and smiling, after suffering a heart attack. The second one was a French man who drank plenty of wine and died, happy and smiling, after suffering a heart attack. The third one was a Filipino. Amid thunder and lightning, he was out smiling, thinking there was some jackpot waiting going on. He got hit by a lightning and died, happy and smiling.

* * *

Today's Gospel (Mk. 1, 12-15) tells us that after Jesus was baptized by John in the Jordan River, the Father's voice was heard. "This is my beloved Son with whom I am well pleased." If the Father were looking at you right now, would (s) he be happy and smiling? Are you living a life pleasing in the Father's eyes? Is the Father happy and smiling looking at your family? Is He happy and smiling looking at our country? Is He happy and smiling looking at the world?

* * *

We are children of one and the same Father, and it must be a pleasing sight for Him to see us living each other like the dysfunctional family we are. Surely Asia, it is so heartening to hear that all nations are trying to give their share to help the victims of the cataclysmic Dec. 26 tragedy. Finally, hopefully, we are learning our lessons. Instead of spending millions to spy on and kill each other, we are now helping one another. The Father must be smiling seeing us reach out to one another again as brothers and sisters.

* * *

"Let it be so for now." There are many things that are beyond our control in this life. We must admit our limitations and our helpless condition. There are so many things we cannot comprehend, explain, or understand. It is our faith, our belief in someone greater than you and me, that help us to cope and go on. Without faith, life would be a dead end. Without faith, life...with all its tragedies and brutal dreams—would be a senseless, cruel web of meaningless and unfortunate events, with no end in sight. Faith is a gift, for it lets us see beyond what meets the eye. Faith gives us meaning, and hope. Thank God for the faith we have received through our baptism.

* * *

We must not stop at the calming effect of faith in our lives. True faith should disturb us, stir us and move us. Our faith should not just be a spectator—just there, in case of a flat tire. Rather, it should be the engine that should keep us going, that should bring us to our earthly mission, that should lead us to our final destination. Check your engine. Maintain your engine. If necessary, overhaul your engine.

* * *

But are now on television every morning, 7 a.m., or Studio 23, for a Sunday TV Mass and a talk show to deepen the faithful's appreciation of the Sunday Gospel. It is our way of spreading our faith worldwide, through media. What have you done, what are you doing to share the faith? Have you not yet set sailing or improving our faith on others. Instead of triumphalism or the holier-than-thou-tones, we are talking of dialogue, respect, appreciation of the faiths of other people.

* * *

My joy ultimo to "Tessay" Ody Pamatmat who spent many years of his life spreading the faith through radio, particularly Radyo Veritas. Here was one person who shared his talent in broadcasting and his faith by broadcasting. Shouldn't we all be busy sharing our talents and sharing our faith through our talents, which are, after all, God-given?

* * *

I had Christopher de Leon and his son Rafael to coat talk show recently, and I could feel the closeness of this father-and-son duo. I was particularly touched by their mutual respect for one another. So evident was how Christopher's pride and delight in his son. Rafael is a son that is pleasing in his eyes. How happy parents and daughters who still give their parents joy and pride; and sure the children be blessed with parents who don't give them too much concernment, from no fuss and drama.

* * *

By the way, Christopher de Leon was the "horse whisperer" during the recital of Fernando Poe Jr. Unknown to many, it was Christopher who led, encouraged and encouraged the actor Tessy so good in spite of the fatigue, the heat, the noise and the crowd. The more I think about it, the more I see the role of parents as whisperers (not "whisperers") of hope, encouragement and love. Children need parents who are not only loud or decibel-ous, but who whisper to their what life is all about. If parents themselves do what is right, they don't have to shout, for they can say their much "quietly and clearly." And they too need not say much, for "True say little, who have much."

* * *

May we all become hope whisperers, we need, today ours and women who will sound up and inspire hope despite the dark clouds hovering around us. Let each one of us give our ears love, but hope for and to each other.

* * *

A moment with the Lord:

Lord, make everyone a love whisperer, a hope whisperer to others. Amen.

* * *

E-mail: orbos@manila.svdcs.net

The Athenian Code of Conduct

REVELLE

Ramon J. Farolan

FOR the Annual Rites of the Philippines, the year 2004 synonymous for the Athenian Code. Never before was the institution subjected to such harsh and reckless examination by the public in matters of the quiet introspection reserved only for sworn officers and of a comprehension only commissioned unto the regular forces. The evaluation, recommendations of these officers changed with exemption and other forms of examination by way of a formal observance, the Philippine Military Academy. For decades, the period dedicated to the choice is Filipino—soldiers hold the people's trust and respect as the premier military institution of the land.

Today, on your own after graduating in ceremonial, the signatories of the Academy is in tatters, outwardly stained by the change of guard and occupation lifted against a member of the institution, accompanied by action endangered and in foundation shaken upby threats greater than ransoms. The problems involving Philippine Military Academy officers and graduates, the Philippine Military Academy Alumni Association (PMAAA), fully aware of the critical situation for active graduates, in particular, and the Armed Forces, in general, has taken steps unique in the annulment of the mess held on the occasion of the Academy's centennial.

One of the most significant programs of the PMAAA is the renewal and updating of its Code of Conduct both as a reminder and in a challenge for its members in the military, police and civilian life—as a reminder of what our people support of them in the performance of their duties, and a challenge to provide the leadership we need for the survival and progress of our nation. We have taken this matter for guaranteed we too long a time forgetting that a soldier's duties are of service, not of mere feeding or enforcement.

From what they were, the Code of Conduct is lined and sources and/or other documents on the same subject, which have resulted in the longest and all-encompassing in a comprehensive and has resulted a similar code of conduct observed by the young men of ancient Athens in the form of an oath taken upon reaching the age of 17. At this time, Athens was in the summit of its golden era and was undisputed queen of the Hellenic eastern world.

> "We will never bring disgrace on this our City
> by any act of dishonesty or cowardice.
> We will fight for the ideals and sacred
> Things of the City
> both alone and with many.
> We will reverence and obey the City's laws and
> will do
> our best to create a like reverence and re-
> spect in those above us.
> who are prone to annul them or set them at
> naught.
> We will strive increasingly to quicken
> the public's sense of civic duty.
> Thus in all these ways we will transmit

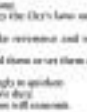
Athens City, not only not less, but greater and more beautiful than it was transmitted to us."

We hope we also need a code of conduct, not just for our soldiers or our public officials and employees. We all—our people—starting with the age of 17 (schedule's but necessarily as the example Greek more along the Athenian model).

Having stated the subject of codes of conduct, let me also share the views of the late Sen. Claro M. Recto. More than 50 years ago, he was honored with a parade and review by the Armed Forces at Fort William McKinley (now Fort Bonifacio). For his speech, he was asked to dwell on the subject of the "Code of the Filipino Citizen." News reported by saying that the "Code of the Filipino Citizen" is no different from the codes of other countries. It is basically a compilation of standards of behavior made in accordance with the Constitution and the laws of the Republic. Recto told "I tell you that you must obey the Constitution and the laws, that governments, solve legislators, must derive their just powers from the consent of the governed, that the duty of the citizen is to vote for the happiness of the people, that honesty and integrity must be responsible traits in the citizen and public leaders of public affairs, that the Armed Forces are the guardians of the liberties of the people, and that the primary duty of the Republic and their men is to the One to defend them and protect them and the law to destroy them and to close them... you remember reasons would be to convince me by saying that you know this and you need not be told about it."

"In the problem lies our in the lack of knowledge of these principles; these norms of conduct or citizenship but in how to give reality and efficacy to them is that they are in our lives present in your student body, in your civic organizations, in your daily behavior—it is not, therefore, merely the knowledge of rules but their faithful observance, that is of importance."

A health scandal



AT LARGE

Nina Jimenez-David

(Introduction exactly a big cancer is

All I wrote in yesterday's column, cervical cancer is the only form of cancer whose cause is known and easily identified. Other forms of cancer even precursors of cervical cancers are also easy to identify and the precancerous cells themselves take from three to 10 years to develop in order to cancer. It is more possible to screen cancerous or precancerous conditions, chemotherapy-free ongoing from adopting a healthier lifestyle to have an invasive cure pre. And with the exception of breast cancer, the Department of Health Operation of Cervical Cancer is young (about) and for a cancer, it may well soon be the only preventable form of cancer.

Given all these information at it, it's clearly a scandal why so many women continue to die of cervical cancer.

Dr. Ernesto Manuel Llaneza, chief investigator for the Pap test in trial in the Philippines, says we think the reason for this "scandal" is very simple: cancer is fright," as both patient and doctor are given plenty of chances to diagnose, treat and cure us from the disease. She outlines the following "reasons" for the diagnosis and treatment of cervical cancer.

A woman should go for her first Pap smear three years after her first intercourse. This, as mature females are more receptive to cervical cancer. As early sexual initiation is considered a risk factor. She should then go for a Pap smear at least once a year, though after three consecutive "normal" Pap results, she may need to go for the same only at two-three year intervals.

THERE are elementary procedures to the Pap. Increasingly popular is the "acid wash," which calls for washing a woman's cervix with a solution and allows the doctor to clear personnel to visually observe the presence of lesions. Llaneza also warns against the many false negatives from "traditional" Pap smears, mainly because the commonly used smear tends that easily collect up all the cells they harvest. For on the number tests are required to be done, the more likely the chance for "hawkeye." It should also be clear that the accuracy of a Pap smear study depends highly on the skills of the lab technicians analyzing the samples. Hence, the need for quality control over the lab results, not the least of which is to relieve the patient of anxiety that she unnecessary.

Of the clinician finds "abnormal" results from the Pap test, the patient is referred to a colposcopy, which allows for a more detailed microscopic examination of the cervix. In case of "suspected" findings, says Dr. Llaneza, the doctor will also do a biopsy and/or an HPV DNA test, which will confirm whether the patient has an HPV infection (two types of HPV—out of possible 100—are directly linked to cervical cancer). The problem with an HPV DNA test, she says, is that it is fairly expensive, about P3,000 a procedure.

HPV cases with a positive HPV finding, it's still not the end of the road, or the beginning of any kind of cancer. What doctors look for, says Dr. Llaneza, is "persistence" HPV infection. A sexually active, unmarried in her 30s, she says, will probably not get pregnant for the first time. Therefore, she will be able to get rid of it. But if the still tests positive for HPV 10 years later, her doctor will begin to watch her more closely as persistence infection could lead to cervical cancer.

All the doctors stress the need for regular screening, as cervical cancer in the early stages displays no symptoms. If a woman experiences pain in the pelvic area, abnormal vaginal discharge or bleeding, "she's probably in the late stage already," says Dr. Llaneza.

Obituaries and reasons

AT THE BURIAL on noon ago, I have observed some things I hardly notice before.

Let me start with obituaries. Reading them (no favorite) a daily habit. When I come across scientific notes on individuals attacked at the age of 80 to 83, I am thankful to be healthy at 70 and, mind you, with my feet still black. Obituaries of people who die at the age of 90 or 95 make me wish I could be in time.

My interest in obituaries led me to conduct a "survey" of the death notices published in the business front sheets in December last year. The survey covered 1,075 death notices, 626 of which were for men and 449, for women. Though not based on random sampling, the "survey" still is worth the time and effort" came up with some interesting findings. In 200, or 21 percent, of the obituaries, the profession of the deceased was shown. Since had the longest life, you, averaging 86 years. The priests came next with an average of 81 years, followed by the doctors with 79 years, the military officers' rank 73, lawyers rank 72 and engineers rank 71.

On the average, men died much younger than women—71 against 76 years old. Doctors, who are supposed to have avoided the hazards body, die younger than priests by an average of five years. The 67 doctors in the obituaries were included women who, on the average, live longer than men.

Our obituaries, unlike in other countries, greatly vary in size, suggesting social status. 1119 were large, one-fourth page and bigger, and 119 were small, less than one-fourth. Twenty-five was the average age of the dead in the large obituaries; 21 for the small.

Many of those who announce the death anniversaries of their loved ones request readers to pray for the eternal repose of the souls of the departed, never mind if they have been dead for years. I wonder how many readers heed these and why anyone has to be told to pray for those could appeal to the fate of a soul deemed of eternal rest on Judgment Day.

From obituaries, let me go to wedding anniversaries. Many couples renew their wedding vows. Does this mean their marriage or relationship has weakened through the years that it has to be renewed? Or does it mean that they need a little "push" to keep their love going? Again, it's a wonder that they are still married! Either way, the "renewal" of wedding vows could be interpreted to mean that a marriage has failed or is failing.

Recently, I was at the golden wedding anniversary of a cousin, who was celebrating the event with his wife (eight in the family). When I asked my cousin if he would repeat the eighteen-day wedding vows are unlike a dozen's license, which has to be renewed because it expires. But the celebrants pour each other a golden mug in celebration of the 50 years (perhaps the old rings were not made of gold and had holed) that's been together in his hand and under 50 cents in the coin—at the marriage of the days because everyone should know what is meant.

I have had more observations, when I go to our farm in Quezon province. For instance, why such diverse by means of women is not easy to. On having this issue, you not another big such that embrace the same country name. Instead, several in one family have different names. While daughters tend to take such signs for granted, the married parents and parent various roles expect to see the name of the next town. They, women conclude that a county is between two municipalities of the same name: Infanta 96.

My 8-year-old granddaughter was telling me what she just learned in school. After she had read the chart she knew dropped into the tot could not to in his shelter. The elementary now come from a government program—introduced some 20 years ago—combining the use of old cans to build sanitary fish habitats. But sanitary habitats or reefs are also effective fish-aggregating devices popular among innovative anglers in the waters there south. In the Philippines, that can lead to overfishing.

Copying from developed countries without careful study may do more harm than good. Japan and the United States are streets without fishers laws, but the Philippines cannot. Besides, our use of old tires to construct habitats only serves as a fish attractor, not as a habitat. Fish need to hide and they are already overfished coastal areas. I hope such saving in shoebox ideas and acronyms do not couple in children's storybooks.

We are probably the only country where both the metric and English systems of measure are used. Here area is expressed in square, also in square meters. But weight is measured in grams, and lumber is sold in feet and inches. Meat and fruits are weighed in kilograms and grams, but lumber weight is commonly given in pounds and ounces. Water consumption is in cubic meters, but water tanks in subdivisions are marked in gallons. Children, even from exclusive schools, cannot tell the difference between a centimeter and an inch. So do post-marine leaders and media people. "At least [we're so influenced by Americans. It is not that by law the Philippines has adopted the metric system just like most other countries? That is the reason computers are required to label locally made goods in kilograms, grams, liters, millimeters, etc. As a result, some traffic signs are still in metric and English units is seen in advertisements. At the dean of the CP College of Law noted of traffic violations in the Philippines, "Laws are mere suggestions, compliance optional, punishment unpossible."

I think we should have other reasons for doing things, if we can, not to imitate. Common practice and authority and reasons hardly good enough to justify our actions.

The Lacunian, '53 is a retired professor of Ateneo Lacunae from the University of the Philippines, Diliman.

HIGH BLOOD

Elsie Lacuanian

PRTD (she like be know the concern of the unsymmetrical and about what makes their blood pressure rise or makes them sit back, content and well with themselves. —Ed.

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Leadership and the common good

PUBLIC LIVES

Randy Gutcal

THERE are many ways of identifying leaders. One way is find positive ability, initiative over anyone else. Sources in the Philippines is that there is a lot more devoted, spurred by the innovative subsidized to rank bands and rainbow initiatives in the public in response to the quiet introspection reserved only for sworn officers and of a comprehension only commissioned unto the regular forces. The evaluation, recommendations of these officers changed with exemption and other forms of examination by way of a formal observance, the Philippine Military Academy. For decades, the period dedicated to the choice is Filipino—soldiers hold the people's trust and respect as the premier military institution of the land.

Today, on your own after graduating in ceremonial, the signatories of the Academy is in tatters, outwardly stained by the change of guard and occupation lifted against a member of the institution, accompanied by action endangered and in foundation shaken upby threats greater than ransoms. The problems involving Philippine Military Academy officers and graduates, the Philippine Military Academy Alumni Association (PMAAA), fully aware of the critical situation for active graduates, in particular, and the Armed Forces, in general, has taken steps unique in the annulment of the mess held on the occasion of the Academy's centennial.

One of the most significant programs of the PMAAA is the renewal and updating of its Code of Conduct both as a reminder and in a challenge

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THEY SAID

Spiritually starved

"The gift and the joy for poor must always coexist by virtue of the rich's social dynamics, and those who, by missionary and donating their power, authority and influence, are mentally impoverished and spiritually starved."

—Archbishop Fernando Capalla, president of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines

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TALK *of the* TOWN

Please send feedback to ...
Editor Jaime F. Sorreda Jr.

Are we ready for a tsunami? (2)

A TSUNAMI (pronounced soo-NAH-mee) is rare but destructive. The tsunami spawned by a magnitude 9 earthquake in the Indian Ocean on Dec. 26 killed more than 150,000 people in 12 countries in South and Southeast Asia and on the east coast of Africa.

World leaders, who gathered in Jakarta on Jan. 6 in Aceh to see the best way to speed up aid to victims, agreed that a tsunami warning system like the one in place in the Pacific should be established in the Indian Ocean as quickly as possible. "It is proven that 10 minutes advance warning can save hundreds of lives," Thai Foreign Minister Surakiart Sathirathai said.

Without a reliable warning system in place, coastal communities in the country are at the mercy of tsunamis. Knowing what tsunamis are can also save lives. A tsunami scare had sent thousands of residents of Pagudpud, Solsi and Tirol-Tirol running to the hills on Thursday following an earthquake.

Tsunamis travel at the speed of a jet. Far-field tsunamis in the Pacific Ocean may take 2 to 10 hours to travel before they reach the east coast of the Philippines. But waves from locally generated tsunamis can hit the shore in 2 to 30 minutes, according to Philippine scientists.

Local governments officials admit that they are not ready for a tsunami. To save lives and property, the government must come up with a tsunami-preparedness plan.

We have yet to make preparations

By Gov. Victor Aphayani
Mangaldan

The tsunami that occurred in the Indian Ocean is an eye opener to Pangasinan, a coastal province with 119 towns and cities along the Lingayen Gulf facing the South China Sea.

While we have developed a high level of preparedness in coping with disasters brought about by typhoons and flooding, we have yet to have preparedness for tsunamis. The disasters are similar because they both involve unimaginable waves that bring widespread havoc.

Fishermen are probably the first flood warning systems and even our communities can gauge storm behavior and the gravity of the situation. We have organized rescue operations and municipalities and communities have established evacuation areas.

Tsunamis, on the other hand, come suddenly and whatever action local governments can take will be mainly dependent on international or national tsunami warning systems.

Warning

Will there be enough time between the warning and the disaster? We understand that, depending on the distance of the origin, the lead time can be minutes or hours.

We hope that effective international tsunami warning and monitoring systems can be put in place and that the national government will recognize the need and invest in the necessary equipment and technology.

Local governments can conduct responsible information campaigns, determine appropriate evacuation routes and conduct drills. Planning provincial, municipal and barangay disaster risk reduction councils can be established.

National and local governments should begin to discuss the measures to take and determine the appropriate use of prepositioned resources like ambulance and construction of routes and funding in relation to a calamity event, which is possible but which has a very low probability of occurrence, and must decide if the preparedness or responses can be made.

Our folks don't even know what a tsunami is

By Mayor Jeffrey Khaughan
Subic, Zambales

Subic and many other coastal towns of Zambales are definitely not prepared for a tsunami. But local folks do not even know exactly what a tsunami is.

They are not aware of how such natural phenomenon occurs and how serious its impact can be. Some don't even realize that our town is vulnerable to tsunamis.

So, how can we be ready for something we have no conception of?

Our town will surely be wiped out of the map in case a tsunami hits us. Tall towers might collapse due to the tsunami's force because we are facing the sea and no one will be spared.

It will be very difficult for every one of us to survive what our country's recent disaster experience is due to the tsunami.

Beyond imagination

The tsunamis that hit several countries in Asia and claimed thousands of lives, were beyond our imaginations. Only on television and newspapers did we see the devastating effects of a tsunami. Only through reports did our people realize that a tsunami is one serious thing we all have to be aware of and prepared for.

But honestly, the local government unit of Subic is not ready for such disasters. We do not even have communication equipments to warn or inspire any runaway.

The only thing we can do right now is to study well the basics of tsunamis. It will be hard for the people of Subic to prepare for these since there has been no experience of local tsunami occurrence.

We will surely be relying on the advice of the national government. We cannot do it alone as the local experts. If international help can be conducted to address this threat, then we will be there.

Lives have importance

But the concern will to make our people ready for it is to help them be aware of the impact of tsunamis and inform them of ways to survive the disaster. We will rely on leaders all information needed to save ourselves and our people against killer waves.

What is important now is that in lieu from the experiences of other countries hard hits devastated by killer waves.

It would be better if the national government could immediately upgrade its equipment to detect coming tsunami calamities, not just typhoons but more on early signs of impending tsunamis. We will try to adopt modern warning systems to inform our people of our location.

The local government unit will always be doing their share in keeping the people safe from disasters.

Editor's Note: Subic is located southwest of Zambales, about 113 km northwest of Manila. Strategically positioned in the dynamic Asia-Pacific region, Subic Bay became 68,000 hectares, including some land and forest-bedding islands. The figure may be off-line and people from Hong Kong to the south reached to 162. We had to brace ourselves to an inevitable typhoon. It was a strong earthquake. However, during that time there was no way to determine the magnitude of the quake. I was 11 years old then.

There were a series of aftershocks. The trees and walls became unsafe. The springs, which were the source of drinking water, also turned muddy and then unfit for human consumption.

Moments after the earthquake (unknown to most people existing at the time), we heard people crying and a set to implement a province-wide information drive on disaster preparedness.

• Communications and Warning Service Team. This will keep the public informed and warned of an impending disaster.

• Rescue, Evacuation, First Control and Treatment Service Team. This will organize the rescue and evacuation operations.

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These clusters which are composed of representatives of the government and private sectors, positively cover the entire gamut of disaster preparedness and prevention—from activities of impending disasters, rescue and relief operations to rehabilitation and reconstruction. In our case, a disaster alert shall operate on a 24-hour basis. We have set up a province-wide communications hotline.

Because Eastern Samar is a coastal province, we have put emphasis on earthquake and tsunami disasters. But this is not to say that we are capable of preventing earthquakes and damage in case of disasters. Actions, we have a system in place.

Aside from mobilizing all the necessary resources from the government and private sectors, another equally important component that will make disaster preparedness more effective is giving people proper information on disaster preparedness.

In addition, the Local Government Code and a circular on calamity fund should be mastered, especially the provisions related to the use of the fund for disaster preparedness. The circular was issued by the Department of Budget and Management and the Department of Interior and Local Government.

The joint memorandum circular provides that "in extreme cases and under extraordinary circumstances, such as but not limited to, acts of terrorism and calamities of a magnitude and highly communicable diseases, such as SARS, the calamity fund may also be utilized for disaster preparedness without need of bringing a declaration of calamity provided that there is a presidential proclamation on the existence of an adverse event that would warrant the declaration of the entire country to be under the state of national calamity, which need to be presented or suppressed."

Straightjacket

The provision puts a straightjacket on the use of the calamity fund for disaster preparedness.

In light of the recent devastating typhoons that pummeled several provinces in the country and the tsunamis that hit 12 countries in South and Southeast Asia and on the east coast of Africa, the need to amend this provision to extend the use of the calamity fund for disaster preparedness has become more urgent.

But beyond these monumental and structural changes, what is paramount in disaster-preparedness plans is the support and cooperation of the people.

Of course, this should be coupled with prayers to spare our province and our country from calamities.

Relax use of calamity funds

By Gov. Ben P. Evardone
Eastern Samar

Aside from being situated in Asia's typhoon belt, the Philippines lies in the Pacific tectonic Rim of Fire. It is regularly shaken by earthquakes and volcanic eruptions.

The tsunamis that claimed more than 150,000 lives in Southeast Asia and Southern Asia could also occur here and bring death and destruction to coastal communities.

Eastern Samar, admittedly, with 23 of its 25 municipalities along the coastline directly facing the Pacific, is vulnerable to tsunamis.

In fact, even just minor quakes serve as the impetus and alert for long hours in residents of coastal barangays. How much more of tsunamis?

Because a significant number of Eastern Samarenos are fisherfolk, it is just to impossible to convince them to relocate to barangays far inland. Besides, I will not even suggest it.

Shoreline

One of the priority projects of local government units is the construction of breakwater or coastal shoreline. But these shoreline projects are very costly and sometimes destroy the pristine beauty of our beaches. Hence, we have to resort to other measures to address the impact of natural calamities.

We allocated less than a Provincial Disaster Prepared-ness Plan, which is aimed at providing protection, search and rescue, relief and rehabilitation to the provincial, municipal and barangay levels of all available public and private resources, organizations, and facilities vital to the needs of the people affected in cases of natural and man-made calamities.

We have set up a 24-hour Provincial Disaster Operations Center (PDOC) headed by Provincial Disaster Coordinator as action officer. Under the Provincial Disaster Coordinating Council, we have organized several action teams with corresponding specific tasks. These are:

• Intelligence and Disaster Analysis Team. This evaluates information and operates all activities of intelligence and disasters.

• Plans and Operations Team. This has formulated specific action plans for various types of disasters.

• Resources Management Team. This is tasked with determining the logistic requirements needed by disaster victims.

• Public Information and Education Service Team. This is tasked with disseminating the necessary information to the public.

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Tsunami-prone areas in the Philippines

SOURCE: PHILIPPINE INSTITUTE OF VOLCANOLOGY AND SEISMOLOGY

PHILIPPINE HEADLINES / MYLENE CRUZ-AMRAN

EYEWITNESS ACCOUNT

It was high tide but the seabed suddenly became exposed

By Gloria V. Pilapil-Arada

Below is a story on the east coast of Leyte/Samar, facing the Pacific Ocean. Patricio Beach in Calbayog City is located due to glowing white sand and is a tourist destination for sightseeing enthusiasts.

It was almost a ghost town during the early part of World War II, when it broke out in the Pacific on Dec. 8, 1941. Most of the inhabitants evacuated to the mountains because they were visiting Japanese soldiers. Any civilians who failed to heed to a passing school will notice he slapped.

Before noon in the hour of his pain, if her pleased to she greeted with a hopeless. Another women people there to reside temporarily in the mountains during the war was on plane crops for sustenance.

Our house is located in the center of the town two women away from the seashore. We can even hear the sound of the waves crashing against the shore. Any conveyance in the era can be clearly observed.

One sunset morning at about 10:00 or May 1942, while my father and elder sister were relaxing in our living room, we were suddenly jolted by a strong shaking of our house and heard rumbling sounds. The figurines on tables and picture frames hanging on the wall reacted to fall. We had to brace ourselves to an inevitable typhoon. It was a strong earthquake. However, during that time there was no way to determine the magnitude of the quake. I was 11 years old then.

There were a series of aftershocks. The trees and walls became unsafe. The springs, which were the source of drinking water, also turned muddy and then unfit for human consumption.

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Evardone is the spokesperson of the Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines, the umbrella organization of local officials.)

Across the NATION

3 sergeants nabbed while transporting illegal logs

BUTUAN CITY—Police in Agusan del Sur arrested three soldiers and seized two military trucks carrying illegally cut timber in Tandag town, capital of Surigao del Sur province, on Tuesday.

Supt. Ramon Espinosa, Agusan del Sur police director, yesterday said Monday's operation that led to the arrest of the three soldiers and the military vans is a major victory "against lumberjacks in general."

"We don't care who they are, we agree on one," Espinosa said of the lumber.

Espinosa said the soldiers identified as sergeants Petronilo Abella, Antonio Ladera and Ernesto Bautista are with the army's Forward Service Support Unit based in Butuan City.

"We have had long been suspicious of their illegal logging activities," Espinosa said.

He said the operation was launched on Monday morning following a tip-off.

Espinosa said around 6:45 p.m. the two trucks, loaded with illegal forest products, passed by Barangay Lankilalon in Tandag.

He said their haste in the checkpoint near the soldiers initially refused to stop.

Federal men accumulated 3,000 board feet of logs with a market value of P75,000.

Charges

Espinosa said the soldiers were already charged with illegal logging.

He said the police were investigating if the soldiers were involved in other illegal logging activities in the area.

President Macapagal-Arroyo has declared a campaign against illegal logging in the aftermath of the July 2003 flash flood disaster in Southern Leyte that killed hundreds of people.

At least 1,000 people died and hundreds of others are missing as a result of the flooding.

Mr. Arroyo has banned commercial logging operations in Sierra Madre, Northern Luzon, the Cagayan Valley and the government's reforestation program.

Obstacles

But Boncog, chair of the community-based resources, said the drive would not succeed if people lapped to help see the cases engaged in illegal logging.

He said in Caraga region alone, there were problems reports that illegal logging officials are behind the illegal logging.

"But we need to administration on the ground," he said.

The Bon People's Alert Ahmed the extensive new plantation coverage in Caraga in the end of 2004.

"Illegal logging is not to be blamed in the destruction of Caraga forests but the legal logging," Bon-ga Madlot, spokesperson for the Mamamayan Pangkapaligiran Front in Mindanao, said.

He said the resistance, mostly backed by local politicians and corrupt environment officials, have been openly abusing and accusing persons to cut timber.

Bonglot Barcelonita, Caraga environment director, dismissed the rebel group's claim.

He said his men have been alert in monitoring the logging activities of concessionaires and true groups operating in the area to prevent illegal "persons."

Arnaldo A. Dalagdi, PhilStar Bureau

TIMBER FIRM VS RESIDENTS

Townsfolk warn of war on logs

DIVISALAN, Aurora—Residents of this typhoon-ravaged town are resisting government attempts to bring logs swept off the mountain to a standstill, warning of war should this happen.

"If they proceed with the plan to take the logs out of here and bring them to Divisalan Circle (Poblacion) and Bonuanan's, I will proclaim a state of war," Benito Lopez, chair of the Sitio Bulo ng Maphalodan sa Barangay (old the Poblacion or Circle).

He said the logs that littered the 27-km coastline of Barangays Buton to Baco, Culing, Minalwa, Bonot and Dialuey should remain in the villages to help residents recover from the landslides that battered Dingalan on the border of four typhoons in November and December last year.

Farmers have been unable to till arable fields since last year because huge logs from hauled in mud and the waters on the eastern side of the Pacific Ocean continued to be swept.

The Japanese saw hundreds of farmers have cutting charcoal and hauling huge makeshift rafts to some near the shores right on where the logs had drifted.

"The loans are gone. (This is) our only hope now," said Jimbo Bilkes of Sitio Amutan, Buton on Baco. He scooped his feet hard on the soil that covered his 2.5-meter-by-two-meter house that was housing of wood.

They have also gathered the bigger trunks, saying these make for housing material.

In Dialuey, a village of more than 1,000 families, at least 154 houses were destroyed, Lopez said.

In many houses, smaller trees were being dried and stacked as firewood.

Residents rated cars were used as fences or barricades against storms.

"These came from nature. Why give it to our company that contributed to the calamity here?" Lopez said.

But other farmers have sold wood to Green Gold.

At the company's sawmill in Sitio Sawy, site in Umiray, the logjams were a crime morning when looked like trouble on lumber depots. Environment Secretary Michael Defensor's order for the company to quit and all its equipment and machines.

Another resource at the Natural Resources Development Corp. and DENR chair Victor Corpus had turned down a proposal to bring the seaward logs to the sawmills of the Isarog Pacific Forest Resources Corp. (IPRC), Bonuanan-based Green.

In a memorandum, Reynaldo Bonabilis, community environment and natural resources officer in Dingalan, ordered the mayor to coordinate the owners and engineer as well as file charges if the violation was confirmed.

The DRDC sources said Corpus, in instructions of President Macapagal-Arroyo, wanted the residents to benefit from the logs.

In a meeting with Dingalan Mayor Jaime Ilarde, DENR and MRDC representatives agreed that the agencies will retrieve the logs on the shoreline while the municipal government will sell them through auction and issue permits. *Dennis Orejas, PhilCentral Luzon Desk*

SOLIDER Lorenzo Baguio is angry over against meningococcus

Health execs conflict on outbreak tag as soldiers clean up Baguio

BAGUIO CITY—World Health Organization officials said there was no outbreak of meningococcemia in Region CAR, contradicting a statement made by Health Secretary Manuel Dayrit on Friday.

Dr. Lantigman Villa, program manager of the emerging and re-emerging infectious unit of the National Center for Disease Prevention and Control of the Department of Health, said Baguio is officially on the meningococcemia alert based on WHO standards.

But she said calling the situation an outbreak is still debatable although Dayrit was interviewed on TV Friday describing the cases of meningococcemia in the city as "technically an outbreak."

"We are still assessing the situation. We need more information so it is difficult to say" said Dr. Rhoda Sobrino, WHO expanded advisor for communicable disease surveillance and response.

The WHO team assessed the 39 cases in Baguio and Benguet from March 21, 2004 to Jan. 7 this year and said 24 cases met the criteria for suspected meningococcal infection. The WHO team said four cases from December 2004 to Jan. 7 this year were confirmed to be meningococcemia.

Villa also spokesperson of the newly formed meningococcemia command post announced by WHO here, said cases of confirmed meningococcemia are being admitted daily at the Baguio General Hospital and Medical Center (BGHMC) from Dec. 23 to Jan. 7.

Due to two suspected meningococcemia cases were admitted every day during that period except Jan. 5.

Villa, Dr. Gerald Dimdam and Obtrina will be in Baguio to assess the situation in the next two weeks.

Villa said the patients' ages were between two months and 80 years, with the median age set at 20 years. Half of the cases (17 of 34) died, representing a 50-percent fatality rate.

"Obviously almost pathogen could have contributed to the fatal transmission of the disease," Villa said.

On Saturday, the summer capital's city, January cold accounted of the past Feb. some of dengue soldiers who volunteered to clean up streets in Baguio.

Bonuanan on Avenue Road were surprised when at least 30 members of the 166th Brigade Ready Reserve Command pulled out brooms, soap dissolved in water and disinfectant tanks and began cleaning up the busy street.

Next week, the army is scheduled to disinfect La Trinidad, Benguet, a first cousin of the first meningococcemia cases were reported, San Jose said.

Liz Setnabel documented seven meningococcemia cases, with three fatalities last year.

The disease is transmitted to people, and not by their environment, said Dr. Antonio Bautista, leader of the team monitoring the disease.

Government efforts to clean up the city surroundings will help decongest areas that are prone to contamination, he said.

Dayrit earlier identified the Baguio City public market which was also disinfected up and down lasted by the army on Saturday morning, as the source of contamination

INQUIRER Mindanao

Woman pushes cooperative for tribe

By Jeffrey M. Tupas
Mindanao Correspondent

Cotabato City
Bureau Chief Nico A. Rivamonte

SHE HAD expected it to happen: The 59-year-old resident of Sitio Cabanglasan in Barangay Cassion, Maitumbo, Compostela Valley consistently made her feel that she was someone very hated.

At first, Arlene Bodiet said she could not understand why she was being ostracized by the famed indigenous people when all she wanted was just to help them. The answer, she found out on her own, was all in the past.

In a small community such as Cabanglasan, where everyone knows each other, speaks the same language and thinks almost exactly the same—seemingly connected with the absence of opportunity for them to explore—she was the perfect outsider who seemed to play a big role in transforming the villagers' lives.

For Bodiet, it was an ambition to see the community metamorphose into something better from what she met: subsistence farmers who lived a life that the community would forever be shackled by poverty-ridden something was done.

For the villagers, her sweetness was nothing but a show of insincere. Or, perhaps, they were not opening up to her for fear of being brainwashed in the end.

It is ignorance Cabanglasan is a village that defines governmental neglect. The absence of government helps that the people had forgotten for many years made them cling to nothing but the thought that only a miracle could save them.

Bodiet arrived in the village in 1999 as a preschool teacher belonging to a nongovernment organization. At that time, armed encounters between the military and New People's Army (NPA) rebels were usual here in the community, as in most villages in the outskirts of Compostela Valley. Mortars was then one of the strongest lure of the NPA.

The scenes of fighting were usual conditions in the village. The residents were forced to move out time and again, for fear of being caught in the crossfire.

Fear factor

Cabanglasan being home Cabanglasan tribal leader, said the armed conflict was the major reason the villagers were not able to plant crops. This, aside from the threat posed by paranoid military officers who suggested that villagers in general become anti-government and sympathizers.

"Many of us were beaten and tortured by the soldiers merely because we were suspected of being NPA members or their supporters. That time I was really developed by fear," Sano said.

Bodiet, who moved around Compostela Valley to teach the "uncivilized" children of farmers and fishermen, was also under suspicion when she arrived in the village. She said her activities and movements were minutely monitored by the military and to agents.

But the college undergraduate continued working for the children and encouraging the villagers to plant and do something else rather than be idle.

One day, as the fighting intensified, she persuaded the people not to evacuate to allow their presence to the seemingly endless cycle of flight and stay, Bodiet said.

Winning trust

"Sometimes, I felt that I was starting to win their respect and trust. They had all their things packed up and anytime they could have evacuated. But I felt that they were waiting for me.... I felt as I have the things and they trusted me," said Bodiet, who first married a local.

"They needed someone to tell, how and I sensed that it was I," she added.

The chroniclers ended in 2001. It was then that the trust for Bodiet, with the support of Datu Sano, to organize the people.

But some year the Cabanglasan Tribal Association was created, with 30 members. But Bodiet's appeal for more members to join, some members backed out, taking along their share of capital amounting to P125-P200.

The gradual withdrawal of members was a blow to the association and created feelings of cynicism in the community that Bodiet did not hedge.

Co-op's success

The cooperative was able to increase its membership from 30 to 60 members. That was when prices of basic commodities rose sky-high.

The ordinary panday'an was sold at P8 while 1/4 kilogram of salt was sold at P6.... But it was from expensive goods have reached P12 per cup.

The cooperative, with rules and by-laws enthusiastically written in Cebuano with Bikolnonon mixtures, commercially declare from the members' net income 10 percent as payment for loans.

In 2002, the cooperative caught the attention of the World Bank-funded Mindanao Rural Infrastructure Program (MRDP) because of its internal mechanisms that mandated zero-tolerance and the motivated people that ran it.

However, the array of MRDP grants was not attractive to the tribal. "They were promising because of this drought that the government would contribute their hands if they failed to pay funds due loans and credit," Bodiet said.

"Again, we understand a very bloody process of educating them, telling them what they could get from the project. Most were those who easily understood, but there were remember who refused to understand. We assured them that as their leaders, we would not allow them to be abused," she added.

With the presence of the MRDP the cooperative was able to expand its initial project, a banana plantation. It even bought the last woes of banana plantation their villages who were communities.

Bananas

Today the cooperative owns at least 10 hectares of land devoted to bananas. Every week, the plantation yields at least 1,000 kg of bananas that the group delivers to the town.

"Before, we were planting bananas only for consumption. We didn't know that [they are] actually a good source of livelihood. We are very thankful that the government opened this window to us," Sano said.

Samson Dey Bantas said that land is not 'bum for the cooperative, it would be impossible for him to send his three children to school.

"When I was still planting corn, I derived a net income of only P3,000 or even P2,000 after harvest. Since I started to plant bananas in just two months in my eight hectares banana plantation," he said.

The cooperative also attracted the government even more, which recognized it as the best cooperative in Compostela Valley. The group used the cash that arose along with the recognition to develop a fish sanctuary which to grow tilapia.

"I am very happy that because of the cooperative that was established, the children of the people here are starting to change.... Somehow I have proven to them that my intentions were for their welfare," Bodiet said.

"I have gained their trust and I will not fail them," she said.

The efforts of Bodiet are paying to pay off. The people in the village are now inspired as seen in their smiles when they welcome visitors.

Bodiet while working on some documents of the cooperative that she helped build.

NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY
Central Luzon Regional Office
Cabanatuan City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY (NFA) invites suppliers, manufacturers and traders who wants to apply for eligibility and to bid for the following project:

NAME OF PROJECT	LOCATION	APPROVED BUDGET
Re-roofing of Grains Office	Cabanatuan City	P 1,400,000.00

SCHEDULE OF PRE-QUALIFICATION, PRE-BIDDING AND BIDDING

Issuance of Contractor's Eligibility Forms	Jan. 14-21, 2005
Pre-bidding Conference	Jan. 21, 2005
Contractor's Eligibility Forms & Requirements	
Issuance of Bid Documents	Feb. 11, 2005
Bid Opening	Feb. 25, 2005 (2:00 PM)
Evaluation and Opening of Bids	Feb. 25, 2005 (2:30 PM)

All interested suppliers, manufacturers, traders who wants to participate may obtain their bid documents from the Regional Manager's Office and submit the accomplished forms to the Chairman of the Bid and Award Committee (BAC), National Food Authority, Maharlika Highway, Cabanatuan City.

Only NFA-eligible suppliers, manufacturers, traders who wants to participate in the bidding may obtain bid documents from the Regional Manager's Office.

Bidding Documents and Plans and Specifications are available to eligible bidders upon payment of a non-refundable fee in the amount of Php 2,000.00 per project.

All qualified bidders or their duly authorized representatives may attend the Pre-Bid Conference at 9:00 AM on January 21, 2005 at the Conference Room of Cabanatuan City.

Bids must be submitted on or before 2:00 PM on February 25, 2005 at the Conference Room of Cabanatuan City. All bids must be accompanied by a bid security in the form of a Cashier's/Manager's Check, Bank Draft/Guarantee or Irrevocable Letter of Credit issued by a Universal or Commercial Bank in the amount of Two Percent (2%) of the ABC. Bids will be opened in the presence of the bidders' representatives who are present at the time and place specified above. Late bids shall be rejected.

The NFA reserves the right to reject any and all bids, waive any defect therein and accept the bid most advantageous to the government.

(Sgd.) ROMEO J. REGOR
Asst. Regional Manager/BAC Chairman

INVITATION FOR BIDS

FILIPINAS EYE CENTER FOUNDATION, Inc.

Construction and Issuance of a
Historical Eye Referral Center in the Philippines

Supply and Installation of a Simulator Set
at the Sentro Oftalmologico Jose Rizal

1. The Filipinas Eye Center Foundation, Inc. (FECFI) has received a grant from the Japanese Government International Cooperation (JICA) for the "Construction and Creation of a Historical Eye Referral Center in the Philippines".
2. FECFI now invites invited bids for the Supply and Installation of a Simulator Set at the Sentro Oftalmologico Jose Rizal.
3. Bidding will be conducted through open international competitive bidding.
4. Interested and bidders may obtain further information from the Filipinas Eye Center Foundation, Inc. (FECFI) and inspect the bidding documents at the address given below from 9:00a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
5. A complete set of bidding documents in English is available to interested bidders upon sending a written application through the fax number below. The document can be picked up at the FECFI Office and/or sent by mail to the bidders.
6. Bids must be delivered to the address below on or before February 24, 2005 at 2:00 p.m. All bids must be accompanied by a bid security of 2% of bid price. Late bids will be rejected. Bids will be opened in the presence of the bidders' representatives who wish to attend the bid opening at the address below on February 24, 2005 at 2:00 p.m.

Dr. Marilyn T. Reyes
President
Filipinas Eye Center Foundation, Inc.
Sentro Oftalmologico Jose Rizal Building
Philippine General Hospital Compound
Taft Avenue, Manila
Tel 521-2-404-01-28 (Direct Line)
521-2-405-61-20 (Hotline)
fecfi@mailbox.com.ph

INVITATION TO QUALIFY AND BID

DKT Philippines, Inc., a non-government, non-stock corporation, invites contractors, importers, manufacturers, etc. to apply for eligibility to become suppliers for services (printing and execution of creative works, etc.) and materials (promo materials and collaterals).

Prospective suppliers should have the experience in supplying similar requirements of other pharmaceutical companies and the likes, has the required equipment, capability and manpower to handle bulk orders. Only direct producers and/or importers will be accepted. Agents will not be entertained.

Company profiles of suppliers must be submitted on or before 25 January 2005 at:

DKT Philippines, Inc.
Suite 801, The Linden Suites,
37 San Miguel Ave., Ortigas, Pasig
Attn: MS. OLIVE BARCELONA
Operations Assistant

A mystery named Allan Sy

By Anthony E. Alisio
Senior City

WHEN the biggest shabu haul in Mindanao took place on New Year's Eve, suspected shabu manufacturing laboratory financier Allan Sy instantly became a household name in the city.

But aside from being the suspected Chinese-born, nobody appeared to really know who he is, even his own wife.

Sy, a Chinese national who married a Filipina, passed himself off as an investor in the city by owning several "businesses" including franchised mattress manufacturing firm in Bonanza district.

Records from the Bureau of Immigration showed that Sy's real name is Khi De Seng. It was not indicated which part of China he came from but the records also said he is 39.

He first arrived in the country in 1995.

In October of that year, he applied in Manila for a permanent residency in the country on the basis of his Filipina wife and foreigner fact as Republic Act 7919.

He listed his address as 1663 Quezon Street, 5th Avenue, Caloocan City.

BI alien control officer Benjamin Lee said Sy was a frequent traveler.

Last said from February 1998 to June 23, 2004, Sy had 13 trips overseas, mostly to China.

He said plane tickets, reserved from Sy's previous trips following raids conducted by authorities, showed he had been to Thailand, too.

But Jed Pilapil Sy, the suspected shabu financier's wife, said she met her husband in Manila as early as 1995.

Sy, both accounts, Sy's first record of arrival in the country was purchased by at least four years.

'Very nice person'

Jed said she became Sy's good friend because "he is a very nice person who helped me a lot in my stay in Manila."

Later, they allegedly became lovers and decided to get married in 2000.

That year, her husband also opened Ocean Nature's Food Corp., a firm producing junk food. The years into business, Ocean's duo drone became of alleged misunderstanding between the two associates.

Jed said that, in 2002, her husband entered Fun Ranch Corp., which later branched out to Davao and Cagayan de Oro City.

Then came the Polytex Davao Industrial Corp., a foam mattress manufacturing company in Bonanza.

Jed said she could not believe allegations her husband owned the shabu laboratory in Buenos, Yard, which was raided by authorities on New Year's Eve. Six people were time in that raid.

In follow-up operations conducted on Sy's other properties, authorities also seized various drug-making chemicals and arrested 11 more people, including Sy's "waiting" parents.

Supt. William Villanueva, director of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency in southern Mindanao, said Sy used his businesses as a front for his illegal activities.

He said the suspect was already one of the region's biggest drug lords even before the discovery of the shabu laboratory.

He said they had a hard time arresting him because of his "many connections." But he wouldn't name elaborate.

In October 2004, Villanueva said they got information from the US Drug Enforcement Agency that "somebody" from China would be arriving in Chinese to start a shabu-manufacturing laboratory with Sy.

He said this was the reason they put the suspect under constant surveillance.

After gathering enough evidence, Villanueva said they applied for a search warrant and then conducted the raid.

Sunday BIZ
Business Features Editor Marijo Quimpo-Espino

To the rich and educated: Be men and women for others

By Tita Aviso-Dantes

DR. WRIGHT: Churchill famously said that the price of great wealth was responsibility.

And according to John J. DeGioia, president of Georgetown University, the basic responsibility of the "great" alumni and students that pass through the campus of the United States' oldest Catholic and Jesuit university is to take a good hard look at how they could join in the effort to ensure half of the world's population from poverty's deadly grip.

"This is the challenge we pose to all our students: How do we respond to those who live on less than $1 a day?" DeGioia, Georgetown's first lay person to become president, tells Sunday Biz.

DeGioia says answering the call for help of the half of the world's population living below the poverty line was the greatest challenge facing leaders today.

Georgetown University was founded in 1789, the same year as the US Constitution was drafted. It produced many of those leaders that were credited/credited to lead the fight against poverty.

Three of those leaders first came to Georgetown in September 1964: a young man from the city of San Salvador, a young man from a small town outside Khartoum, Sudan, and a young woman from Manila.

They later became presidents.

Alfredo Cristiani was elected president of El Salvador in 1989. Bill Clinton of the United States in 1992 and Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo of the Philippines in 2001.

Now, DeGioia says it was the university's responsibility to provide students with the right skills and values to encourage them to take active roles in improving the lives of the less privileged.

Be men and women for others, he recounted.

DeGioia said Georgetown shares the founders of their respective ability with other Catholic and Jesuit institutions of higher learning, such as the Ateneo de Manila University.

He brought that point home several times last week when DeGioia gave a series of talks to the diverse community Ateneo president Bienvenido Nebres S.J. sits on the board of Georgetown University.

Like most of the students of Georgetown, DeGioia says those from Ateneo come from the elite and have easy access to the money and the opportunities to get ahead in life.

The call is to encourage these students to share what they have with others who have no access to the same tools that come easily to them, once they get out of school and their careers.

Chances are, by virtue of their privileged positions, many will become bank presidents, top lawyers, doctors and economists, that will then step in their place makers and earn a deal can so please for help, or use their knowledge to help others?

Don't pretend hopes that by living the traditions of Jesuit education, the faith of its students would take be more difficult, but morally supportive, road.

"All of our students have to exercise competence and develop themselves," he DeGioia says. "But they have to acknowledge those who don't have access."

And there are many of them, as the headline-making numbers show.

DeGioia says in a speech last Friday at the Ateneo Professional Schools that throughout the world, 40 percent of the world's population or close billion people live on less than $2 a day.

The very poorest of the poor, mostly living in Sub-Saharan Africa, live on less than $1 a day. And in Botswana, people are expected to live up to only 39 years old. By 2010, it will go down to 37 due to poverty.

Almost 2.4 billion do not have access to adequate sanitation. Nearly one billion or 20 percent of the world's population cannot read nor write and as much as 7 percent will be infected with the worst such as HIV/AIDS, malaria or tuberculosis.

"So I said to the undergraduates, this is the world that awaits you; these are the challenges that you will face," DeGioia says in his speech.

But because of the quality education their college graduates get, DeGioia says they are in an unrivalled position to allow them engaging members, especially so for the privileged members of the town and Congress.

"This is a unique opportunity for us of the unique and privileged opportunity you have so far here," DeGioia tells the students. "You have a responsibility to ensure that you are prepared to respond to the demands of justice in our world."

RICARDO Nemenzo, Bienvenido Nebres, John DeGioia and Ambassador Roberto Romulo

DECISION: This is the challenge we pose to all our students. How do we respond to those who live on less than $1 a day?

P&E executives Greg Clark, Jaleip Cua and Ed Imperial do some spade work to build houses for flood-victim families.

Soap and shampoo firm builds houses for fire victims

NEW YEAR started bright and early for a segment of the fire-stricken Nasino Compound in Tondo, Manila, thanks to the generosity of executives and employees of Procter & Gamble (P&G), makers of Safeguard and Rejoice among others.

Recently, P&G Philippines president Johnny C. Concilio shared titles to housing units to 40 families, part of a rapidly-settle large number unrelated homeless by three fires that razed the 57-hectare community last year alone. P&G is also working to donate this year another 40 houses in Calamba, Laguna, where its plant facilities are located.

Assisting Cua at the turnover ceremony were P&G's Ed Imperial, general manager & external relations director for ASEAN-Australasia fields, and Greg Clark, CBS site head-ry and General Kalinga executive director Tony Ricketts.

P&G executives and employees from its offices in Makati and plant in Cabuyao are using at least a day's worth of their collective pay to fund the building of the houses in cooperation with General Kalinga, a multi-sectoral partnership dedicated to the vision of eradicating the slum areas in the country. They put in per se. other three days of national labor to assist persons, paint walls and landscape to relive it now known as the P&G Village this side of Tondo.

Cua said P&G, which is celebrating its 75th anniversary in the Philippines this year, is committed to nation-building and making Filipino homes better. "Through these projects, we at P&G give back to the community part of ourselves to help realize this commitment," he said.

The first 16 of the 40 housing units to the P&G Village were built and unveiled on October 30 last year. The rest were completed on the same day or that the titles to the new homes are were turned over to grateful communities.

"This is the greatest gift I have received in my life," said Isman-bert Sana Antan, 46, mother of three children and one of the beneficiary-families, in Filipino. "Before, we lived in a cardboard house that was easily blown away by a typhoon."

Double-digit rise in health insurance premiums seen

PREMIUMS for health care were are going up by 15 to 20 percent globally because of inflation and the rising utilization of health policies—surprisingly by young workers. In addition to the higher number of utilized among younger workers, they also tend to be more health conscious and prone to make use of health benefits by consulting with physicians frequently, notes Lawrence Lee, regional managing director of Aon Consulting Asia.

According to an Aon Consulting 2004 Health Care Trend Survey, these trends have led to double-digit increases for all types of medical coverage, a cost borne mostly by employers.

Given these developments, there is an increasing need for companies to explore innovative ways to offer health care to their employees at lower cost, according to James Hunt, president and CEO of Aon Asia Pacific Insurance Inc., Aon's subsidiary in the Philip-

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SCHOOL OF PROFESSIONAL AND CONTINUING EDUCATION

Forget fine dining–go for a casual, relaxed ambience

By Amy R. Roma

UPSCALE Mario's Restaurant was the place to eat steaks and salads in the '70s and '80s.

But the '90s did not prove to be a good decade for the restaurant. From fine establishment, it refused to transform in time.

Four years ago, however, the second generation took some steps to bring its famous Spanish dishes closer to the growing dining-out market.

In 2001, Mario's Kitchen opened.

Mario's Kitchen carries the classic gastronomical experience of Mario's into the fine dining concept. It offers Spanish, Continental and Filipino food at affordable prices in a casual, relaxed atmosphere.

It caters mostly to the young urban professionals and even college students.

"We wanted to reach out to more people and open in more places through Mario's Kitchen," says Mario's son Bernie, managing director of Mario's Kitchen.

"When we thought of Mario's Kitchen, we were already thinking of franchising it. But it took us almost three years before we actually did it," he adds.

It was only last year that Mario's Kitchen finally opened its doors to franchising.

Finding the right first franchisee was difficult, according to Bernie. Prospective ones took their time. Bernie says they wanted to be sure everything was set—including the system, structure and commissary—before they started granting franchises.

The chief concern coming from the dining crowd is for a challenge as well.

No exclusive, Bernie relates he had to convince his parents to be allowed to use the point-of-sales (POS) system in their restaurants as opposed to the traditional cash register system, used for over 30 years in the two branches of Mario's.

Servers were reoriented on how to serve the food. If in Mario's, waiters had to serve the food in sequence in serving food, in Mario's Kitchen, everything has to be served immediately.

And with the help of franchising consultant Primero Jr., Mario's Kitchen finally set up its franchise package,

BERNIE and Barnaby

which includes comprehensive training and ongoing support, site selection assistance, marketing and promotional support, and grand opening plan and assistance.

Backed with more than 30 years of culinary experience and restaurant management, Mario's offers franchisees not only its trademark cuisine, but also a "tried and tested operation."

Total estimated turnkey investment cost ranges between P9.38 million and P9.54 million for a store size of 80 to 120 sq. m., with an additional investment of about P1.3 million for rent, insurance, training, licenses and permits.

Advantages

Bernie says setting up a franchise has its advantages.

First, they do not need to pour in additional capital and manpower. It may be more expensive to put up a company-owned branch than set up a franchise.

Also, control and focus on each branch can be maintained.

"It's like a technology transfer. We open over the experience we (have) chance by teaching, training and checking on them every now and then. Their success is our success," says Bernie.

With the franchisee managing the operations, the Mario's Group would not have difficulty in overseeing and ensuring that systems are carried out in line with Mario's Kitchen standards.

First franchisee

In October 2005, Bernie and his family flew to Davao with their potential franchisee. It was followed by another round of talks in January 2004 before the deal was closed in June.

Bernie says they took a long time because they wanted to make sure that the franchisee understood what handling the Mario's Kitchen franchise was all about.

Jose Ignacio was the first franchisee of Mario's Kitchen.

The restaurant is located at the ground floor of Monteverde in Matina Crossing, Davao, is being managed by his two daughters, son and their spouses. It opened last October.

Ignacio says so far, the Mario's Kitchen is very much in sync with their philosophy and they shared the same belief regarding consistency.

"The only difference among branches should be the location. But the quality of food, level of service and operations should be a notch in all the restaurants," says Estrada. "People shouldn't be able to tell if the food came from this or that branch."

Estrada adds that they wanted a restaurant with a commissary which has primary control of the quality of products and supplies in every branch. Having this control ensures the consistency in the quality of products.

"That's exactly the frame of mind we want our Franchisees to have," says Bernie. "Those who don't think this way may start doing things on their own to cut costs, which is dangerous on our part."

"When you come across an entrepreneur that is a little too eager to share their name is any selling franchises, you start questioning if they are just out to expand with no regard whether the integrity of their products will be maintained," says Estrada.

Before, the restaurant's founder opted to open "getting to know each other."

Plans for 2005

Bernie says for this year, they hope to have six more franchisees out mostly in the areas of Manila like in Baguio, Pampanga and Tagaytay.

In the next five years, Mario's Kitchen targets to have 50 franchisees and plans to tap the Visayas region as well.

MARIO'S Kitchen's first franchisee is located at Monteverde in Ortigas

Celebrating four million hours of safety

AYALA Land's One Legazpi Park Ayala Land Inc. condominium One Legazpi Park recently celebrated the achievement of its 4 millionth safe manhour, and was awarded by BEI Corp. and Ayala Land, Inc's senior management, for observance of maximum control.

The ceremony recognized those involved in the construction of the Ayala Land office tower and was attended by BEI and ALI's management officials, employees, and invited guests. It coincided with a Christmas party for employees also held at the project site.

The event emphasizes the significance of safety in every project's construction, according to Rod Bautista, assistant vice president of ALI's Residential Buildings Group. "The reason we celebrate is because we feel that as far as safety is concerned, every one of us has an obligation to make sure One Legazpi Park, or any other project of Ayala Land, is a safe workplace," he explains.

He adds that this can be considered a rare accomplishment that construction owners will appreciate because their homes will be delivered without unnecessary delays caused by accidents.

"The buyers can expect that the project will be delivered as committed. The commitment is still June 2006, so there are still a lot of things we have to finish within the last quarter of 2005 to make sure that the project is ready and completed to our desired quality," says Bautista.

Project director Mike Milner of ALI's Construction Management Group similarly cites the people involved in making the construction site accident-free at all times.

"All the players have contributed to this achievement at One Legazpi Park, from top management to our consultants, engineers, architects, our contractor EEI Corp. and their subcontractors, supervisors, foremen, lead men, and laborers," he re-

BEI's Bautista, ALI assistant vice president; Mike Milner, ALI project director; Albert Quiroga, EEI project director; Peng Milling, JAM associate; Angelo de Villa-Larsen, ALI senior vice president; Emilio Bautista, ALI vice president

marks. "This is indeed a collaborative effort of everybody."

In the spirit of holiday fun, construction manager Jose Milling and Associates also awarded select individuals with special certificates in an afternoon of food, music, and Christmas festivities, which would be the last to be celebrated by the staff at the site as it nears its completion and delivery date.

For more information: mailto:pdsales@ayalaland.com.ph, or log on to www.ayalaland.com.ph.

RP still world's top abaca producer

LEGAZPI CITY—Two line agency Bicol regional officials involved in the development and promotion of abaca and abaca products agree that the Philippines will still be the dominant producer of abaca in the world, despite the threat of Ecuador.

In a roundtable discussion with the bicom.ne.ws here, Fiber Industry Development Authority regional director Ramon Bermudez says 85 percent of the world's demand for raw abaca materials and products is still supplied by the Philippines while the balance comes from Ecuador. Bermudez notes that the world consumption of abaca fiber from 1996 to 2004 averaged about 75,266 metric tons annually. One metric ton is equivalent to 1,000 kg.

Of this, he says the Philippines supplied 63,833 metric tons of abaca fiber, while Ecuador's share was 11,754 metric tons.

Bermudez said Department of Trade and Industry promotion division chief Melchor Aguilar cites reports of a decline in the production of abaca in Bicol and Eastern Visayas, the demand for it in the national and international markets.

Aguilar says the demand for abaca in the region has even been on the rise.

"In fact, it even soared compared to Samar and Leyte, as more and more small and medium enterprises have been engaged in abaca fiber production and handicrafts to the point of way to produce, process and export these products," Bermudez says.

The fiber from the region is still highly competitive, he adds.

Bermudez says the country produces about 500,537 bales of abaca every year. One bale is equivalent to 125 kilograms.

Of this total production, Bicol contributes more than 162,000 bales or about 20,662 metric tons, which was 11 percent of the total abaca produced by the country from 1994 to 2003, he adds.

Bicol production rose to more than 25,000 metric tons in 2004. Of the 20,662 metric tons of total abaca production in Bicol, 94.7 percent have consistently remained of good quality.

Other areas with abaca in the country's total abaca production are Samar, southern Leyte, eastern Mindanao, and some parts of the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao.

Southern Leyte's annual production used to be 250,000 bales. However, it is now declining, Bermudez adds.

The Fida official discloses that both Samar and Leyte are suffering from rampant attacks of viruses that left most of the major abaca plantations, resulting in low production this year, while Bicol continued to produce more.

It was in the years 1997, 1999 and 2001 that a virus massively attacked abaca plantations and somehow affected the production of Bicol and Eastern Visayas.

But production easily bounced back as Fida was able to control the spread of the virus, Bermudez says.

Areas planted to abaca in the country from 1994 to 2004 were about 111,148.86 hectares.

Bicol's share was 44,077.60 hectares, or about 38 percent of the total abaca area in the country, while Eastern Visayas contributed 33,369.3 ha, or about 29 percent.

A GIRL weaves abaca to make 'dalandan'

Low utilization

Interestingly, only about 60 percent of the abaca raw materials have been utilized for handicrafts by local producers and exporters, Bermudez notes.

Most of the abaca produced have been exported as raw materials, which are being used as rayon, tea bags, currency and napkins, among other utility products, owing to the durability and strength of the fiber.

Bermudez says Bicol has remained one of the top, if not the consistent, abaca fiber producer in the country for only one type of raw materials but also of various processed abaca products that are exported to England, United States, Canada, China, India, Thailand, Japan and other European and Asian countries.

Since the Spanish period, Bicol, along with Samar and Leyte, has been the top region in the production and sale of processed abaca, both here and abroad, the Fida official says.

But it was in the '60s that Bicol became the most dominant producer of abaca fiber being used for holiday decor, gift wares, accessories and the famous sander bags and slippers being

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Future landmark for new Beijing business district

By Sandra Garcia
Contributor

THE IMAGE Plaza Beijing development, one of the largest ever integrated urban development projects undertaken in Beijing, involving the redevelopment of 400,000 square meters of prime land on Beijing's central business district, is set to change the face of Beijing's central business district.

The project involves the construction of office towers, a major retail center, restaurants, entertainment complexes, residential apartments, and the 5-star Sofitel Wanda Beijing hotel.

The 453-room Sofitel Wanda Beijing will be built according to new national "Platinum 5-star" hotel standards and will be an integral part of the Wanda Plaza development. The hotel and Plaza will be located near CCTV's Beijing bureau, Trader Center, the Motorola Building, Hewlett Packard Building and will be home to the Titan Wicket office and a Walmart.

The hotel will also have 50 long-stay apartments, four Sofitel executive floors with adjacent Sofitel executive lounge, a Sofitel library and non-smoking floors, a rarity in Beijing. Guest every floor offers such extra services. Sofitel executive room guests can enjoy a similar five stay should they choose.

The Sofitel Wanda Beijing will provide important business infrastructure in preparation for the 2008 Olympic Games, and builds on the growing presence of these hotels in China.

THE WANDA Plaza Beijing development

The other hotels are the Sofitel Wanda Chengdu, which opened in 2003, the Sofitel Beau on Haitian, Sofitel Jin Jiang Oriental Pudong and Sofitel Royal Lagoon Dongguan as part of what is quickly becoming China's most recognizable luxury hotel brand.

For feedback, please e-mail sdg@sdgbizz.com

Double-digit rise . . .

(To see page B4)

plans. Pushing disease prevention programs that help contain potential illnesses is one way to do it, he says.

Companies have also narrowed by administering their own health funds. Dispensing advice and other services to companies who have opted to use self-administered health funds are among the services offered by Aon, the world's second largest insurance broker with 330 offices that formed the region 10 countries.

Insurance brokers like Ayala Aon have the flexibility of comparing insurance packages and offering "out-of-the-box" solutions to clients. The latter includes managing retirement systems that administer and analyze trends in employee claims. "It's our business to help clients achieve cost efficiency and to enhance workforce productivity as part of our employee benefits services," says Mori.

In Hong Kong, according to Lee, Aon sponsors annual flu vaccination shots for their staff with the onset of the cold weather. In the Philippines, Ayala Aon has initiated a Wellness Program for its medical policy holders in an attempt to counter rising health related costs. It conducts seminars and regularly disseminates health advisories on relevant topics such as stress management, cardiovascular problems, fitness, acne eyes, proper weight management, colds and vaccines.

More importantly, it pushes health care members to have an annual physical check-up going to the extent of arranging scheduled and check-up procedures for plan holders. A regular physical exam often uncovers health problems at an early stage or while the disease is still manageable.

The most common illnesses reported by Ayala Aon-serviced companies include cardiovascular, upper respiratory and gastro-intestinal problems. Mori's claims that Ayala Aon has invested heavily in a comprehensive computer system that allows on-line claims monitoring which speeds up the reimbursement of health-related claims. All their claims can be monitored from the time it was received until settlement. Clients can promptly access their medical claims status online.

Limited time period exclusively only for new deposits in foreign currency (US$ only). Rates are per annum based and subject to 7% withholding tax.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
SUNDAY, JANUARY 1, 1995

Sunday LIFESTYLE

TUNIC in brown Ilig-weaving gold and white design by Edith Barredo

OFFICERS and members of Congregacion del Santisimo Nombre de Niño Jesus

What Child is this

500 images of the Sto. Niño in vestments spun in gold and woven with gossamer will be on exhibit to coincide with the fiesta on Jan. 17-30

THE CONGREGACION del Santisimo Nombre del Niño Jesus celebrates its silver anniversary that coincides with its annual Fiesta del Sto. Niño, Jan. 17-30 at the Philippine National Bank Financial Center, Diosdado Macapagal Boulevard, Pasay City.

The congregation, which now has 27 members, invites all Sto. Niño devotees and the faithful to participate in the event.

Registration will be held from 7 p.m. Jan. 17-19, at the PNB Long Gallery, 3/F of the PNB Financial Center.

Five hundred images of the Sto. Niño in breathtaking vestments will be on exhibit on Jan. 20-29 at the PNB Long Gallery. Spun in gold, woven with gossamer, embellished with baubles, the vestments worn by The Holy Child in His numerous appellations will reveal His devotees' faith and depth of devotion.

The embarkment of "Nuestro" and the first day of Novena Mass on Jan. 20 will be followed by a ribbon-cutting ceremony opening the exhibition. PNB president Lorenzo V. Tan, honorary mayors headed by Luis Alfelor, honorary consul of Guatemala Mollie Abbass and Imelda O. Cojuangco will cut the ribbon.

Bishop Teodoro Bacani is among the prominent guests invited to the annual event, which has been held at the PNB Financial Center for the past seven years.

A grand procession on Jan. 30 of persons bearing the most images of The Child Jesus will cap the annual Pamesday Sto. Niño. It will end at the Luneta Grandstand where an Imitation will be staged. A fireworks display will be held that evening.

SATIN silver tunic with silver and gold design

BROCADE with floral design chasuble and stole in lipsanan Baroque style with gold chantilly lace trim

VESTMENT in Dalmatic style with blue and magenta rinestone design by Ben Farreles

MEGALANS at Highlands-Armenia and Crispy Laurel

DIVING and health fanatics Ambie and Lingling King

WEDDING anniversary in Tagaytay for Jessie and Cynthia Fabian

GORGEOUS couple Chris and Nanette Po

VISITING from the United States, Eileen and Chris Quiroz

TAGAYTAY weekend retreats Manny and Irene Sison's

Rare chance to catch up on tourism race

A WELCOME one New Year ends high hopes of a better life ahead, let us all pray for continued blessings for 10 quiet overachievers.

In monumental tragedy comes a glimmer of good. A world divided by religious and political indifferences has united to support the afflicted.

It's almost incredible that for once, our country was spared from a natural disaster. Although we also have had recent multi-million typhoons, the damage and toll has not nearly been as calamitous as that befalling our sister Asian countries.

Here the tsunami has badly damaged our neighboring countries' tourist areas, we should now double our focus on improving our own tourism spots.

Borrowing locally has never been so socially correct. Spending in pesos helps in every little way by spurring economic activity in the country into its many unique, place-to-be-seen hot-

Tessa Prieto-Valdes

Vacationing locally has never been so socially correct. Spending in pesos helps in every little way by spurring economic activity in the country

THE ROADSTER, a 1936 pale-old car displayed at Baguio Country Club

ANITA Magsaysay-Ho and Hella Delgado

NEW YEAR party host Mary de Leon with Marivic and Joe Concepcion

HOTEL Elizabeth winners Bedi and Jo Fernando

COMPANY friends Lizanne Dickson, Karen Vrolijk and Sue Hire

HOLY company with Fr. Eli Santos and Isabel Buenaventura and kids

LUCKY winner Dennis Valdes, party-host Bubbles Delgado, Dennis' new wife Myung Hwan Yu, Jeanne Mylene Hil Kim, Helen Delgado and Jose Mari Cruz

Just week to reopen the rooms to open Hotel Elizabeth, a hotel project of my interior design firm.

With Dennis presenting me from going to the market, I went instead to the shops in Mines View Park, since it has more open style markets and less chances of encountering any robbers. Baguio also gave me the chance to dine at an old favorite, Master's Restaurant, which still makes a mean Caesar's salad.

I ordered several loaves of raisin bread from the bakery of Baguio Country Club (BCC) to share with my friends since I decided not to get their strawberry jams from the market. BCC will be celebrating its centennial anniversary next month and will be having wonderful dinner Sizzle Nirvana for the big bash. It's really too bad that the club has not/did agreed on doing the historic because now they just get to read all this from politicians' Lois-doing for Christ!

As part of its centenary, a 100-year-old car, one of the first in the country, is being displayed in its lobby. It was brought in by the trading firm Estrella Del Norte in 1904 and sold to brothers Augusto and Demetrio Tuazon. One local Larry King and cut Daniel C. Gibbs fortune, some years ago, car among the many others he collects.

The Year of the Rooster is forecast to be even more difficult than last year. But I strongly believe that you can master your own destiny by shooting positively. At the annual Christmas party hosted by gracious couple Bubbles and Hella Delgado, my husband Dennis won the grand prize — a business-class round-trip ticket to the United States to Asiana Airlines. Missed logic, I won the grand prize last year! Blessings like that should not be taken for granted!

E-mail me at inquirer@inquirer.com.ph

HEALTHY family Marivel, Ella and John Gokiko

Pines City

In spite of the health warnings regarding a viral disease called severe acute respiratory syndrome (Sars) — which, I visited the City of Pines last week to inspect the rooms to open Hotel Elizabeth, a hotel project of my interior design firm.

With Dennis preventing me from going to the market, I went instead to the shops in Mines View Park, since it has more open style markets and less chances of encountering any robbers. Baguio also gave me the chance to dine at an old favorite, Master's Restaurant, which still makes a mean Caesar's salad.

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Russel Watson in Manila; alcoholic's mobile, anyone?

MUNTINLUPA (August—Ratmil Watson. One of the most singer-performers Mexico with a powerful and angelic voice, Russell Watson, is coming to Manila.

From being typhoid-ridden, he rose to an international phenomenon as a classical singer in the build of Andrea Bocelli and Hector Pavarognilla. His debut album, "The Voice," sold millions, opening up avenues for him to perform for European royalty like Prince Charles, heads of state, A-list celebrities and even the Pope.

His latest album "Encore Musical" is coming a stir in the charts with songs penned by Oscar-winning Hans Wimmer and Gary Barlow. What is amazing

HUSTHAVE ROOMY: embellished headbands

about his repertoire is that Watson is an unbelievable stepping opera as well as standards from "Nessun Dorma" to "Bridge Over Troubled Water").

The concert will be at the PICC Theatre Hall on Feb. 10. A portion of the proceeds will go to the victims of tsunami in Asia. Quite coincidentally, Russell and the Asian tsunami disaster victims, in fact, has revealed a charity single along with Cliff Richard and Roy George, titled "Gold Never Rusts Old," shining how the first entertainer to come to Manila who is lending his time and talent to help out the victims.

This is a one-night-only concert. Call TicketWorld at 891-9999.

Best new TV series—"Desperate Housewives." It's the most popular TV series in America and I can't get enough of it. It even made me forget that other series that had four women living in New York.

What is it about? Well it's a little bit of "Sex and the City," "Three Leading," "Melrose Place" and "Twin Peaks." In each episode the four main characters (played by Teri Hatcher, Marcia Cross, Eva Longoria, Felicity Huffman, plus Nicollette Sheridan) deal with issues in adulting suicide, loneliness, raising hyperactive kids, murder, pill popping, double cheating, rude neighbors and of course, sex.

This is all in the backdrop of the very picture-perfect suburb of Melrose. Less than four months Manila. The rest it's

TNT Trends & Trendings

Anton San Diego

happening in your village as you read this.

Must-have CD—"The Chillout Project Hitster Sessions" by Anton Batton. Basically playing on my ipod in Asian Karma' several compilations of lounge and chill-out tunes grouped that's simply amazing. "The Chillout Project" started in 1997, which was part of a local radio program and still can be heard on Jazy 97.1 under the name "Lounge to Chill." TCPHCL has four compilations to the largest-selling has more compilations in the country. So, if you think that each music list joins the vein of before (Think cement) you are very wrong. "The Chillout Project" is available at music free and all Tower Records outlets.

Chilling under the influence. Here's lounging for two more and music on Jazay and Globe) to consider Australia-based Virgin Mobile is offering a new service for street-dudes. Who are they? Those party people who have had too much to drink and happen to either call their friends in their directory because of their anger or happen to sleep on their phone because they passed out. Virgin Mobile dialing a number. Virgin Mobile blocks all the incoming and outgoing calls till a certain hour. Sounds great, right?

Something to munch out for... The Sage Restaurant (Intramuros) at The Fort — Eden Mendoza (Asia, People's Palace) made the most delicious and sophisticated place ... The concert of seventeen's favorite male singer, Martin Nievera, and international singer Paul Anka on Jan. 15 at the Araneta Coliseum and Thursday at 9 PM/8:00... the Golden Globe Awards on Jan. 17 on Star Movies—but we couldn't stop watching it 9 a.m... Also on Star World (live via satellite) the premiere of two new's favorite, "American Idol," Jan. 19, 8 p.m... Idols Monique's new CD and the soundtrack from the "Bridget Jones Diary: Edge of Reason," need I say?... the ongoing Negros Night Festival, capital city of Negros Occidental, Jan. 15 (9:00)... American films, I honestly need something the Metro Manila Film Festival, caught one and was really disappointed. At all something of caliber comes out can't remember the 20 films, especially "Mano Po Forever" up and running from comes the shameless play "Pinoy Youth Who's talking" (Jessie Liriam, Irma Adlawan, and this writer) every Wednesday 10 p.m. on Channel 5.

The new formula—Sun/Smart. The brand's new line for women to wear in 2004. For 2005, the accessory the year

RUSSEL Watson, "The Voice," is coming to Manila

is the headband. If you think it's just going to be plain and with a ribbon, you are still in an 80s time warp. This year's headbands have to be studded, belted with semi-precious stones, Swarovski crystals and the like. If you still can't find it here, wait about two weeks and we are sure most fashionable brands will be selling it.

E-mail the author at antonsd@hotmail.com

Sunday LIFESTYLE Home

Gardening in a glass bowl

By Swapoo S. Merlin
Contributor

If you want a garden that will live long indoors, have a terrarium or a garden inside a glass case. A terrarium is not only a bit like a rainforest as well.

How did the terrarium plant get start? About then 100 years ago, a certain Dr. Nathaniel Ward of London found that most of the plants around a factory were dying, probably because of pollution. But he observed that ferns and other plants inside a burnt smoky grew well, behind a glass window.

He tried planting in an enclosed laboratory jar and brought "his garden" into the factory. The plants lived better than those outside.

Called the Wardian Case, this became a standard laboratory experiment in science classes throughout the world. From this experiment, the terrarium became popular and eventually became an art.

Some of the glass containers that can be used are the demijohn (usually called demijohn, large candy jar, large wine bottle, fish bowl, clear glass cone and/or any other container made of clear glass and large enough to contain an arrangement of various miniature plants.

Procedure

First, ideas she considers. For those that are crystal clear, not colored. Prepare the materials—pebbles/gravel, charcoal, potting mixture (one part garden soil, one part river sand and two parts compost sterilized), miniature plants like cactus, seedlings, ti, ferns/any small-size flowers locally or whole ones. Decorative garden/fauna (fresh leaves, miniature fern and carpet moss. You also need white pebbles (Boracay-like, 1) for ground cover.

For large, open-mouthed containers like an aquarium case, you may use drift wood and/or rocks for accent.

Green tips

In the case of the demijohn and other small-necked bottles, you need some gadgets. Using a paper funnel, introduce first the pulverized charcoal (about an inch thick), then the potting mixture (two inches depending on the size of the container).

Then drop the plants. Use a bamboo or wooden stick to push the rooted portion into the medium little by little until the plant stands. Here dexterity is needed.

Try to group the plants in such a way that some spaces are left for the carpet moss and the pebbles. Then introduce about ½ to 1½ cups of clean water depending upon the size of the bottle. After this, you do not have to apply water anymore if the bottle is completely closed.

Terrarium is intended for indoors, not just for homes but also for offices, restaurants, hotels, hospitals and other establishments. To keep the plants alive, you have to put it in a shade over the dome (same). If you use the aquarium type, you have to use the fluorescent type.

The light should be switched on at about 6 a.m. 12 p.m. everyday without fail or for at least 16 hours daily. After the leaves of the plants turn every three or four days—time an open glass one is used.

For more about terrarium making, contact the writer at SWAPOO.

Pond's Expands its Oil & Blemish Control Range

Pond's Facial Basics Start From Here!

Pond's, the skin expert and leading skin care brand of Unilever Philippines, expands its **Oil & Blemish Control Thirteen** with the introduction of three unprecedented products. Pond's Oil Balancing Refreshing Wash, Pond's Antibacterial Facial Scrub, and Pond's Pore Refining Cleanser & Toner.

With signature specially formulated for the Pond's healthy skin experts, Pond's introduces this revolutionary range of facial washes to provide superior oil-controlling control-control, giving every Filipina's face the extra touch needed.

The new Pond's Oil & Blemish Control Facial Washes are formulated with a healthy working ingredients for more effective oil and blemish control. And it is available in 3 variants especially formulated to cater to various skin types: Oily skin, Pimple-prone skin, & Anti-Oil Control skin.

With these three facial wash variants, consumers can select from a wider range of products to suit their individual skin care needs. (upscale Unilever Press, Pond's skin brand manager)

Although the Pond's Oil & Blemish Control Facial Washes were used to effectively remove deep-seated dirt, they are still very gentle to use everyday. Providing less than other ordinary facial wash on your skin, Pond's Oil & Blemish Control Facial Washes cleans everyday grime, and dirt depending on individual facial needs, refresh, moisturize and rejuvenate.

The Pond's Oil Balancing Refreshing Wash is for women with combination skin that has dry and oily patches at the same time; it is very clean. It is a revolutionary oil-free facial wash that thoroughly cleans to remove dirt and refreshes with its unique 3-Step Oil Management System. Pond's Exclusive Formulation effectively absorbs excess oil and deep-seated dirt. Then, Pond's Exact Extract tightens pores to help balance oil production of the skin. Gentle cleansing formula with refresh and revitalize skin, preventing

If Balancing Wash, the Pond's Anti-Bacterial Facial Scrub gently removes dead skin cells and fights bacteria for that extra clean skin down to the pores. It has Gentle Exfoliator Microcrystals that removes the dead skin cells which can hygiene the action of deep-seated skin. It also contains Bactekiller that fights pore-plugging bacteria and Procleanse Anti-Bacterial Extract that thoroughly cleanses the skin while retaining its natural moisture. With the Exclusive Toner helps tighten visible pores, especially in the area. The Pond's facial wash cream also has Bactekiller that fights pimple-causing bacteria.

The third facial wash in the Pond's Oil & Blemish Control Thirteen is the **Pond's Pore Refining Cleanser and Toner** for women who have skin with visible pores. This extraordinary facial wash effectively cleanses the face while removing the pores. Its Pro-Clarifying Microcrystals to cleanse the skin while retaining its natural moisture. With the Exclusive Toner helps tighten visible pores, especially in the area. The Pond's facial wash cream also has Bactekiller that fights pimple-causing bacteria.

With a fresh look and an even better formula, Pond's provides women with effective skin solutions to difficult, acne and blemish skin, allowing women to be as beautiful as they want to be! Get these new Pond's Facial Washes the next time you are at the grocery or beauty shop and refresh the Pond's cleansing system and skin care regimen for the best.

PONDS INSTITUTE

Nature strikes back

SEEING GREEN

Doris Gaubeil Nayda

THIS IS being written in the wake of traumatic but devastated countries facing the Indian Ocean. The calamities swept through several of our neighbors in Southeast Asia and the death toll, as of this writing, threatens to come up to hundreds of thousands.

Rescue and relief work, as much as is possible in the midst of so much destruction, continues today. And for us who have the luxury of viewing the events from a safe distance, the lessons are clear.

Nature is not always docile. Do we fear, humans have abused it. Most should not surprise us when it gives us a dose of our own medicine. When we cut down whole forests, the trees must experience a kind of trauma of their own. Since they can't talk or walk, we may not know about it.

But we should. And there is what should be foremost in our minds as we look at our inventories and sees. Tsunamis may not result from human activities, unlike floods and avalanches, but they are signs that our effects right well to our world.

Let's make this planet as safe as we can by learning to live with Nature, by treating her right.

Pansy Avenue

We heard problems of our own as the year ended, mostly involving cows—one corrupt by compassion, less problems just the same. There is the case of the town's pansy-bearing one, Quezon City, which is being saddened to see traffic.

Some residents protested this move by the city government on grounds that it would remove the traditional character of Pansy Avenue. For this they were stoned and jailed for three days.

Other residents, however, are on a letter—12 residents attached their signatures—signifying their desire to have the project continued. They deemed important support on the project, including tree-cutting activities which we had questioned in this section.

In this, the members of Pansy Avenue, as the letter writers call themselves, replied: "The trees in the east (from Sabado area) will create noise, bottle brush trees, one like rose, rain golden shower trees, gmelina trees, banal are trees, which are not 30 years old... and not mahogany or narra... We value our environment. We do love and protect our trees since we planted most of them. But we still are stuck in the way of progress for the betterment of the society."

It's their decision, of course, but we would still like to call their attention to the fact that they have agreed to the cutting down of more than 10 trees. While there is no move to mahogany among them, the others are no less useful and important. But we must be holding up the wrong branch, if you'll pardon the pun.

Tree-cutting ethics

For doing the same thing (cutting trees), the superintendent of the leading Prison and Penal Farm in Palawan was relieved of his job. He ordered prison inmates to cut down 10-6 old acacia trees in an area reserved for tourists.

According to reports of the Southern Luzon bureau of this newspaper, the inmates had been cutting and uprooting for two days when apprehended by police, acting on a tip by concerned citizens. The inmates said they acted on orders of some top prison officials. The wood was to be used for firewood and the area cleared covered about two hectares.

Approved

No motorcycle could find more approval than the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) when it was restricted recently for allowing a day trip to be on them. The day was a mere away from the asphalt road in front of the Student Union (SU) building, and its jarring motion put passengers at risk.

UPLB, which is mandated to take charge of its immediate ecosystem through the Matalog Center for Mountain Ecosystems (a unit of the College of Forestry and Natural Resources), was quick to point out why cutting the day was absolutely necessary.

From findings of its team of forest pathologists, tree surgeons, tree physiologists and other experts, the UPLB faculty and administrative staff reported that the fungi infestation had weakened the tree's roots, causing it to lean dangerously. The impaired root system stalled, they said, during a construction of the new SU building.

Area to lawmakers tried to save the tree by pruning and bracing it, the fungi infection had spread. The latest problem worsened by typhoon "Yoyong," Ondoy and Seniang.

New nature reserve

Antonio Serna in Lemery, Batangas, has gradually developed into a nature reserve as well as a farm, says its owners Natalia is the former Thai Lake, which opens up to one of the dozen forest areas around it.

Sweet Thai Lake is a 600-meter rock that juts hanging lookout and parks lined with trees. Other nature streams run alongside the parks. A close walk through the pathways bring into focus the variety of trees in the forested areas, as well as the marine life that abounded in the waters.

Birdwatchers and nature lovers in general have all the opportunity to view the variety of birds, insects and reptiles that make this their habitat. Gardens are positioned along the way to give trekkers a chance to rest and see our nature's offerings here.

E-mail the author at dorisnp-dd@yahoo.com

Widower falls for married woman

DEAR EMILY:

I have been a widower for the past 13 years. I am 46 years old and my youngest son is now 11. I haven't remarried despite the willingness of some of my former girlfriends. No one among them could make my heart palpitate.

In July 2004 I met a pretty married woman three years my junior at a PTA (Parents-Teachers-Association) meeting where we were both officers. I was impressed by her beauty and sweetness. It was awakened the passion we shared hands. We became friends after that... and would go to the mall and festival centers on our spare time.

I could not hide my feelings and soon courted her. In 2001 we started our affair. She tried to arrange the fact to leave her husband and even planned to marry secretly and live in another place.

The two years have her husband discovered our affair. She admitted everything to him. He forgave her even if she never asked for it. During this time we just sent text messages as each other because she could no longer go out alone. I was even threatened by her husband.

Then we resumed our affair each last year, (which) went on until our misunderstanding later that year.

I've tried to get her out of my mind (accepting) that she's married and will never be my lifetime partner. But there's not a moment that I don't think of her. How can I forget her?

DAZED

Trying to forget her now—right this moment—is like asking a hole not to cry! Emotions are not like faucets that you can turn on and off. But you are—in the right path. You've already accepted that she's not available to you for the long haul.

Now, open your heart to other more lasting possibilities. Take solace in the thought that nature does not allow a vacuum. Moods and grasses sprout in even empty spaces. Hobbies, recreation and good friends can help fill an empty heart.

You can't worry forward if you keep looking back. If your heart

EMILY'S POST

Emily A. Mancenido

was mentioned once, true in the universe that another will come your way.

Your last chore that wasn't meant to be. Just you wait patiently.

A moment of weakness

I'm a 38-year-old executive of a multinational company, married for 14 years with two kids. For the past seven years, my husband had been assigned in the home office. His affairs, he admitted, some he denied. Through it all, I remained a simple, plain-looking individual, doing my best to be a good daughter, employee, wife and mother.

My problem started during my business trip to Japan. I met a Korean executive in his mid-40s. We talked for two hours on our first meeting. That night, I was unable to sleep and just thought of him. I felt something very special for him.

On the third day when I could no longer control myself, I called him up and invited him for dinner. He brought me to a very fancy restaurant with... a view of its moon (playing in the background) and candles all around. The atmosphere was so beautiful, I (almost cried)... we talked about anything and everything.

On the last afternoon, I asked him to kiss me as a memento of the night and to assure myself I wasn't dreaming. He was very surprised, but he obliged. I had the most unforgettable kiss in my lifetime. (Later) he said he wanted us to be just friends —nothing more—since we both had families. I never felt more ashamed of myself than in that moment. My 20-minute drive back to my hotel.

When I came home, I wrote him a letter to explain and apologize, hoping to (restore) the shame I brought to myself, my company, my country. I don't know that, in fact, I found the man of my dreams and wouldn't help asking for that kiss.

Mr. Crayfield said, the gentleman that he was, said he understood. I (stopped) myself from further disgrace by not sending him another e-mail. But this (keeps) me, I said him a card, love Christmas CDs and Nat King Cole's "Unforgettable." He sent, in return, a card and a flower.

Then can I stop this sinful feeling? I, of all people, know how painful infidelity is. I now look for his qualities in all the men I meet every day, and they all pale in comparisons. I keep thinking about him, I miss him and I'm so in love with him. What shall I do to get him out of my system? Does (anyone) have?

SUFFAH

Wouldn't life be simpler if there is a magic pill to loosen our entanglements, and make us forget as if (it) possesses encounter or any meaning (does) not?

But life is meant to be savored in its ups—with laughter, among tears, pain, hurt, humiliation, agony, loneliness—for for a long. Those are the very reasons, the very flavors, the very colors that make living so profound and exciting.

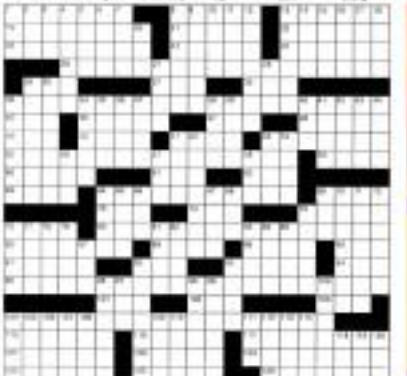
Thinking of you as (a) special (one) way never ends this Emma. It happens. Forget your embarrassment and shame. Move on. Don't agonize over him. Just enjoy the memories. Savor them. For a few moments, you (were) (lifted) on the highest and the lowest of emotions, the painful... be happy... Consider yourself blessed because (many) "could" (not) meeting with this person was, has allowed you a taste of heaven for one fleeting moment.

With all the cheap, jobs and s**t-holes (crawling) this planet, and so many frustrations, depressions and joylessness that fosters such angst—don't you want to relish the beautiful moments you had with this fantastic guy a row to forget? Why would you want to forget such an episode? You'll have all the memories for that.

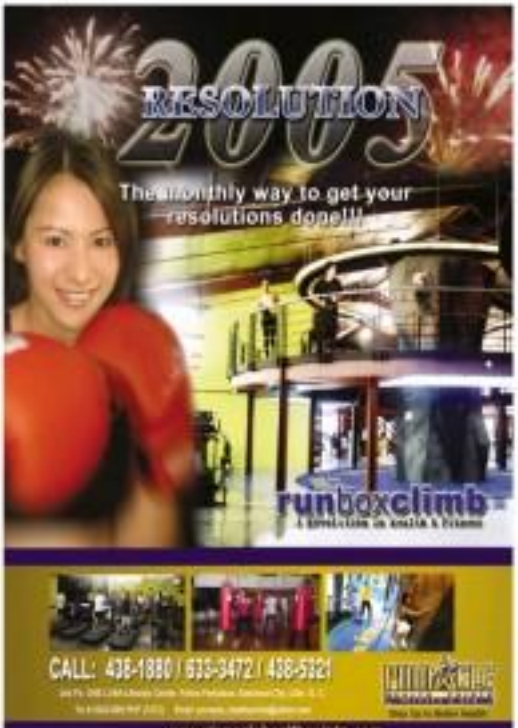
Send your e-mail to the author at emarvelo@inquirer.com.ph. Submit (thoughts, or send your letters to Inquirer, Letter to Mr. Malcolm or (to) program Kalikasan (Digitarra,) 7:15-8:30 p.m., Monday to Friday, or dial 8130.7958.

Sunday Crossword

PREMIER CROSSWORD/ By Frank A. Longo — HALEY SHOPS



(answer on page P3)



125 years of teaching distinguished women

CEBU CEBU

Jaime Piccarrell

THE LATEST alumni homecoming of the Colegio de la Inmaculada Concepcion (CIC) was the grandest ever as it also launched the school's 125th founding anniversary celebration by the Daughters of Charity in 1900; it has taught some of the most distinguished women in the south.

Many still recall the ornate building of the Spanish era, which burned down during the war. It was later rebuilt where the Teatro display center now stands in downtown Cebu.

Since the 1940s, CIC has been run by Sisters Concordia Asensio, Gaw to space limitation, CIC has not gone on ed, and accepts boys only in the elementary grades. My two sons studied there.

Lavish productions

Unforgettable were Mayra Gaviolas as a lusty flying saucer the stage in "A Midsummer's Night Dream"; Annalisa Starkebaum's impersonating Tyrone de Bergerac, long nose, white plume and all; Cordelia Escaño as the vulnerable Juliet of Shakespeare's tragedy and Juanita Mendiola as "El Conde de Lucanorhuyo," and as "The King and I" with Tommy Abad.

Even I appeared in his video—the grandfather in "Chino," President Fuenteveda in "Anton." But nothing British ambassador in "The King and I."

The homecoming even began with a Mass for CIC alumnae, Fr. Faustino Martin, CM, at the chapel dedicated to the Miraculous Medal. The traditional chocolate con churros followed served by the nuns. Other features were Christmas bazaar, family day activities, and the opening of an exhibit at the CIC museum depicting 125 years of existence.

Night school

In the evening, titled Soldiers at twilight a fund-raising gala at the Atlantic Hall of the Shangri-La Mactan to the benefit of the alumnae's charitable projects. One project is the revival of the night school for poor but deserving students.

Alumnae Abby Alonso is lavish and selfeffacing, was the program host. She had some fond memories to share. Mention of Sor Clemente Ojeisias, DC, for a long time the school's head, took us on a trip down memory lane. It is said she was born to a dead family in Spain but left no caution and the maybe.

Sor Clemente had a musical voice and sparkling wit. She had a beautiful, kindly face that glowed as she glided through the corridors. She died, she nurtured, or when she attended some of the school's Spanish musicals. For her golden jubilee, Jose Lorenzo Escaño and his wife Dolly Pilapil-Escaño sponsored production of "Cigarrera y Cabrerita."

Our seniors was interrupted by Mayor asking everyone to cheer briefly. "Three cheers for CIC!" Pause some cable using the count rampart Viva, hip hooray," from Ana Maria Escaño, the quintessential homecelebrant. Her clinging flowery chiffon number drew admiration. "El Cotto Bajito," the candlelit shopping the name of Spain's most prestigious department store.

Silver trumpets blared to announce the entrance of past presidents of the CIC alumni—legal in queens in a stately procession: Gin, Adelina Javier, Berenice Javier Aseron, Cirilita Cabahug Formoso and Anita Cabahug Tumocon.

THE CIC alumni officers: Stella Bernabe, Maricha Jimenez, Marian Kinap, Cynthia Dugan, Bernadette Jugco, Ferne Limotbisot, Lourdes Cole and Kits Ozaeta

Rubies

They were followed by the current CIC alumni officers, all of whom deserve kudos for the success of this and other events of the jubilee celebration: president Stella Esdero Bernabe; vice-presidents Marlette Jimenez, secretaries Heather Dawson Klepp and Cynthia Yap Dugan; treasurer and event chair Bernadette Jugco; her assistant Phoenix Limotbisot Gonzalez; auditor Lourdes Trinidad Cole, PRO's Adelaida Xavier Ocampo and Juanita Veloso Oropesa; and director Laura Osano Villanueva.

Much applause greeted the entrance of CIC school head Sr. Jocunda Cosales, with Sr. Teresa Sapalaba and adviser Victoria Lim-Carreon.

Dinner was served and a delightful program followed. Gene nee was CIC alumna and singer Bobi Vega, who had just become "Reve Diva" champion. The CIC Singers performed, too, rolling those familiar tunes just, relive time!

Jubilarians presented song and dance numbers. Alumnae with good figures and the right wardrobe staged a fashion parade that had everyone oohing and aahing.

For nine evenings, the CIC auditorium registered a full house for the musical presentation "Rhapsody" that featured excerpts from CIC musicals staged through the years. More than 100 girls participated the cast and chorus. In Jocunda Cosales was on top of it all, with Agnes Apaliwak as stage director and the excellent Bilha Sudlon as musical director.

Bilha used to head the CIC School of Music before it was phased out. She led the musical accompaniment every evening, playing the piano. Playing the flutes, recitalist and other stringed instruments were Sarah Gonzalez, Hana Bermundo, Berlie Mahapin, Suzette Mellora, Antoinette Gonzales, Virginia Veyra, Martin Alcantara and Denise Mahapunas.

Lourdes Amaya narrated the show, identifying the sources of the poems presented: "Oliver," "Camelot," "The King and I," "The Sound of Music," "Nobo," "Died in Lima," "Alleyoopmonster," "Jesus Christ Superstar," "Sessions" (the story of Sen Sonia Mercedes Zamora), and "Pippin."

Those who joined "Rhapsody" are clamoring for encores.

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Sto. Niño feast on Jan. 16

PURELY PERSONAL

Josephine Gurrea

IMMEDIATELY after the feast of the Epiphany, churches prepare for the feast of the Sto. Niño which falls on the third Sunday of January. Veneza Blanco began Jan. 7 and will end on the 15th.

Pious Masses will be held Jan. 16, particularly at the parishes of Sto. Niño de Pandacan, Sto. Niño de Tondo, Sto. Niño de Culiacan Cainta City, and Sto. Niño Parish in San Fernando, Pampanga.

The congregation del Santissimo Nombre del Niño Jesus will hold Novena Masses at 5 p.m., Jan. 16-25, at the PNB Financial Center. It will have its 26th grand procession at 3 p.m., Jan. 26, from the Philippine Navy Barracks, Roxas Boulevard, Tiomar of "Virtus del Sto. Niño 2000" is "In the Image Through Mary, Mother of Jesus."

An exhibit of at least 400 Sto. Niño images will open at 5 p.m., Jan. 20, followed by the Holy Mass to be celebrated by Bishop Teodoro Bacani. Registration of images will be 9 a.m.-5 p.m., Jan. 17-18. The event's officials are Cielo Reis, president; Nedda Hara, vice president; June Hall, secretary; and Mel Chiengio, treasurer. Board chair is Jing Orea, while chair emeritus is Tony Adriano. Presiding chair is Jim Perales.

Common devotion

The congregation was founded 25 years ago by a group with a common devotion to the child Jesus led by Ben Bercades. Original members were Ben Bercades, Ely Bautista, Phil Rubay, Cesy Cortez (now Enri Sharon de Jesus, OSB), Bey Gutierrez, Nelia Hara, Elsie de Jose, Jun Limpo, Mona Fonacier, Bobby Balderas and Anny Bautista. The congregation was formally formed in August, 1975. On Oct. 27, 1976, Jaime Cardinal Sin canonically established the group and appointed Auxiliary Bishop Teodoro Bacani as spiritual director. The event was held at the Carmel Chapel of St. Therese of the Child Jesus where the four-foot image of the "Bambin" was also blessed. The image's arms are outstretched in welcome and embrace.

The first official feasts was held in 1981. Ben members were ordained the next year: Tony Adriano, Opie Orea, Mel Chiengio, Marcelo Rafaelle, Benny Bautista, Nandang Hernandez and Jun Salgado. The following year, Jay Cortes, Chito Rogers and Cristobal Melvinton joined the group.

After four years of apostolic work, the Diakonos Pope John Paul II gave the Papal blessing in 1985. Expanding its mission from prayer gatherings to community projects for the needy brothers and sisters, the congregation launched various apostolates such as a police and fire station visitation, a medical and a hospital program, medical mission, gift-giving for calamity victims and volunteers work in various charitable institutions.

In 1989, on its fifth anniversary, many members joined Clemente Bautista, Leopoldo Cuptiatrona, Reynaldo T. Escaño Orea, Antonio Gulang-Gulang, Jose Mario de Leon, Chito Reyes, and Jose Vera. That year, Orea and Olympia Verlaga, the group's barangays were invested the congregation to administer the irresistibly ornamented chapel within the sprawling Malaque Condominium Complex on E. Rodriguez Avenue in Quezon City. The chapel was venue for Holy Masses and the First Communion of poor children from depressed areas of the city.

The congregation has been blessed with many energetic members such as Noel Hernandez and Bernie Esguerra in 1988, Filemon B. Magdaleno, Jr. and Boni Mapa in 1989, and Leopoldo dim Rosa in 1990.

In 1996, Rommel Dimalo and Ricardo Miranda were accepted and, in 1998, Rommel Ortiz, Dr. Efrain Bruno, Dennis Mariano, Jesse Hall and Vernon Sideros joined in 1999. In the Jubilee year 2000, Dennis Bellena was accepted.

Other new members are Arthur Boja, Nicdo Mora, John Howard Esguerra, Joselito Perdido and Steve de Leon.

Parish in need

Fr. Damon Torres of Sto. Niño Parish in San Fernando, Pampanga said the trouble of the Sto. Niño de Pinaja was installed last Nov. 8 and blessed by Archbishop Francisco Oliveros. The day also marked the 39th anniversary of the parish. Fr. Torres, who has a deep devotion to the Holy Child, always wanted to build a fitting altar for the "True Vine who holds us together and sustains us in our journey."

The retablo, sculpted by Ardie de Sico of Betis, Pampanga, is not yet fully paid. Fr. Torres is asking for help. Call (045) 963-2634 or text. The Sinduad, parish treasurer, is 09189385557.

Sto. Niño novena in QC

The Resurrection of the Lord Parish in Barangay Pasong, Quezon City is also holding a novena to the Sto. Niño, Jan. 7-15, after the 6 a.m. Mass and before the 6:30 p.m. Mass.

St. Josemaria Escriva

The Prelature of Opus Dei marks the birth anniversary of St. Josemaria Escriva today. Msgr. Josemaria Escriva was canonized in 2002. Look him to guide me in living a more intense devotion to the Holy Mass, which he said was the highest honor we could give God.

Help needed

A small group of nuns from Burma (Myanmar) is now in Mindanao. Sr. Mary Peter and her house is in Iligan. They came from the Italian Order of Beginning to the Sacred Heart and Immaculate Heart.

They have brought beauty but is need for their mission. In particular, a clay sculpture is ruined with oil and applied to remark.

One product comes from a Burmese flower, another from the bark of tree. There is a blending power will. Items needed. You can help the nuns raise funds for their apostolate through donations in exchange for their beauty products in 2004 for each plastic jar, the cost of the beauty plant in Mountain. Orders will have to be placed via Ash for Sister Regina Ly at 8122230 or 0917 5065951.

Canon

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